

STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Research done by the Health and safety Executive (HSE) show that problems relating to increased stress are very common. Up to 5 million people in the UK feel 'very' or 'extremely' stressed at work and half a million of those say that stress is making them ill. The costs of work related stress to the country is nearly £4 billion a year – possibly more with absence and lost productivity.

Can you relate to any of these work-related problems?

- Job insecurity
- Unpleasant atmosphere,
- No proper breaks
- Unsociable working hours
- Increased workload
- Bullying or ageism
- Working in isolation
- Work and home conflict
- Time off sick – the list goes on.

Alongside the physical symptoms, there are common mental symptoms. Are you experiencing any of these?

- Trouble concentrating
- Frustration
- Irritability
- Anger
- Short-term memory loss
- Depression

How do I know if I am suffering from workplace stress?

It's not difficult to spot the start of the physical symptoms of stress as they often cause severe discomfort. Do you recognise any of these in yourself?

- Panic Attacks
- Headaches
- Indigestion
- Backache
- Increased heart rate

Consider some complementary therapies to keep stress at bay. Below are just a few you might consider.

- Mindfulness meditation
- Massage
- Yoga

Give us a call, we will always find a way to help...

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There is strong evidence that stress increases the susceptibility to many illnesses from a cold to cancers. You may notice other conditions that are aggravated as a cause of stress – do you recognise any of these?

- Eczema
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Heart Disease
- High Blood Pressure
- Psoriasis

Nothing seems to be helping – where do I go for help?

We all manage stress differently so this depends on how YOU feel. If you are feeling unwell due to symptoms of distress, it would be best to seek help as soon as possible. You could speak to your GP or the practice nurse, or occupational health at work. There isn't a specific test for stress, but you will probably have a physical examination to rule out any other conditions and a general discussion regarding general life on a day to day basis in order to try and pinpoint what the triggers could be.

How can I help myself?

In most cases, you can help yourself to alleviate the symptoms of stress:

- Keep a diary for a few days to note the times when you feel stressed and what your reactions were. Maybe log the time, the event and what you were feeling and how you reacted. You can then start to see where the triggers were and help you consider a way forward to tackle the cause and look at new ways of coping better.
- Self help books: there are many good books to guide you on reducing your stress levels.
- Share your concerns with a friend.
- Look at your diet, aim for a good balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables.
- A good night's sleep.

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