



# Practical advice and sources of support to help you if feeling under pressure

## What is pressure and stress?

There's a clear distinction between pressure and stress. Pressure is good for us; it gives us the energy, drive and motivation to achieve our full potential. It empowers us to do our best work in an enjoyable and highly productive state. However, too much (or too little) pressure can have a negative effect on our performance, our mind and our body. This is stress.

**Carnival UK adopts the Health and Safety Executives (HSE) definition of stress:** "Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them."

Stress is a state, not an illness, and where stress lasts for only a short time there's usually no lasting effect. However, if the stress is sustained over a long period, it can have a significant impact on physical and mental health, work performance and morale.



### Spot the signs

If you notice any of these in yourself or a colleague, it could be a sign that you're experiencing stress.

#### How you might feel:

- irritable, aggressive, impatient or wound up
- over-burdened
- anxious, nervous or afraid
- like your thoughts are racing and you can't switch off
- neglected or lonely
- depressed
- uninterested in life
- like you've lost your sense of humour
- a sense of dread
- worried about your health
- unable to enjoy yourself

#### How you might behave:

- finding it hard to make decisions
- avoiding situations that are troubling you
- snapping at people
- biting your nails
- picking at your skin
- unable to concentrate
- eating too much or too little
- smoking or drinking alcohol more than usual
- restless, like you can't sit still
- feeling tearful or crying

#### How you might be physically affected:

- shallow breathing or hyperventilating
- you might have a panic attack
- blurred eyesight or sore eyes
- problems getting to sleep, staying asleep or having nightmares
- sexual problems, such as losing interest in sex or being unable to enjoy sex
- tired all the time
- grinding your teeth or clenching your jaw
- headaches
- chest pains
- high blood pressure
- indigestion or heartburn
- constipation or diarrhoea
- feeling sick, dizzy or fainting



## How to have a Good Day at CUK



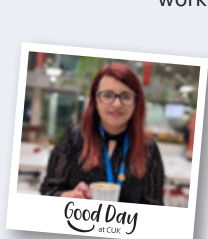
### Sleep Well

Good sleep is key to having a good day and is just as important as regular exercise and a healthy diet. Read our [Sleep Well Good Day page](#) to help you get good sleep.



### Start your day off right

You might be surprised by how much workplace stress affects you if you have a stressful morning. When you start off the day with planning, good nutrition, and a positive attitude, you're more resilient to workplace pressure and stress during the day.



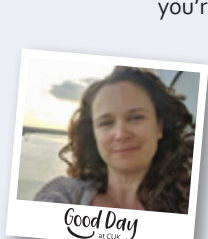
"I take time out to water my plants in the morning."

Iulia Pop



### Stay organised

Even if you're a naturally disorganised person, planning ahead to stay organised can help reduce your stress at work. Being organised with your time means less rushing in the morning, as well as less pressure when you're trying to log off for the day.



"Like the saying, 'You'll thank your future self', being organised the night before always helps me have a good day."

Sarah Wing



### Make yourself comfortable

Physical discomfort can cause stress and is often related to where you perform most of your daily tasks, such as your desk. When you're in Carnival House, it's really important to spend a few minutes setting your desk up correctly before you start working – [follow these simple steps](#). It's the same at home too – [read more here about setting up a remote workstation](#).



### Talk to your manager

We're working hard to shape a positive working environment where everyone is empowered to do their best work. However, we recognise that colleagues may be experiencing workplace pressure and stress. If this is the case for you, please speak to your manager.

Our [Managing Pressure Guide](#) explains how we'll support you if you feel you're unable to cope with excessive pressure and demand, or if you're already suffering from the negative health impacts of stress. However, it's also really important that you take responsibility for your own health and wellbeing.



### Take a break

Movement is medicine for the body and mind so it's vital that you take regular breaks away from your desk and book time out in your diary for at least a 30 min lunch break. Do [these desk exercises](#) throughout the day to move and stretch regularly. Look out for Wednesday Walks launching soon in Carnival House.



### Keep perfectionism in check

Being a high achiever might make you feel good about yourself and help you excel at work but being a perfectionist can create problems for you (and those around you). You might not be able to do everything perfectly, every time, but aim to do your best and make time to congratulate yourself on your efforts. You may find that your results are better, and you'll be much less stressed at work.



### Play your favourite tunes

Listening to music offers many benefits and can be an effective way to relieve stress before, during, and after work. Playing an uplifting song while you make breakfast can help you start the day off feeling better prepared to interact with the people in your life. Likewise, combating the stress of a long day with your favourite music on the way home can help you wind down and feel less stressed when you get there.



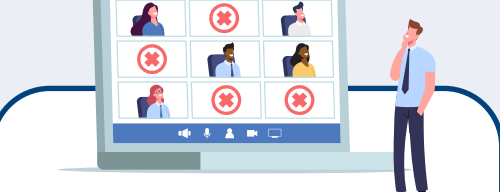
"Listening to music always improves my mood."

Antony Vintchaido



### And relax...

Regular relaxation needs to be built into daily life. Go for a walk, fuss your pets, read, have a bath, or get a massage. Whatever it is that helps you unwind from work, make time for relaxation every day.



### People managers

Absence reporting is vital to managing the pressure and stress your team experience. If we know you're under-resourced, we can help. But this is only possible when you log all absences on myHR portal. It's quick and easy to do; [follow the steps in this guide](#).

#### Your role as an employee

It's your line manager's job to help you stay fit and well at work. But in order to help you, you also have to take responsibility for your own health and wellbeing by:

- telling your line manager or another trusted colleague if you don't feel you can cope
- escalating concerns about your work content in a timely manner
- taking regular breaks and your leave entitlements
- being thoughtful about what personal habits or behaviours might be further contributing to your stress levels
- looking after yourself with good food, regular activity and plenty of water
- talking to Occupational Health or your GP

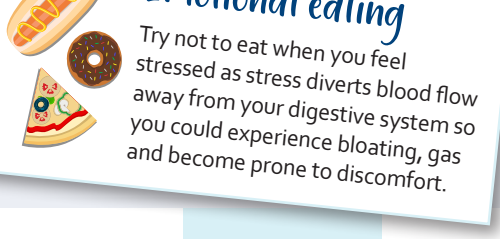
#### Your role as a manager

It's a line manager's responsibility both to give team members the guidance they need to carry out their role effectively and to support them if they are finding it difficult by:

- having regular 1:1s
- being clear, honest and open when communicating
- setting realistic demands for the role around volume, timescale and complexity of work
- providing appropriate induction, training and development within the role
- emphasising the importance of taking breaks and leave entitlements
- giving fair consideration to requests for flexible working
- spotting signs of excessive working hours or unhealthy work patterns
- carrying out stress risk assessments and taking action as needed
- referring team members to Occupational Health for support
- signposting other support available.



Getting out of your head and into your senses can calm you during stressful moments. Stop what you're doing, close your eyes and focus on one thing you can smell, one thing you can hear and one thing you can touch.



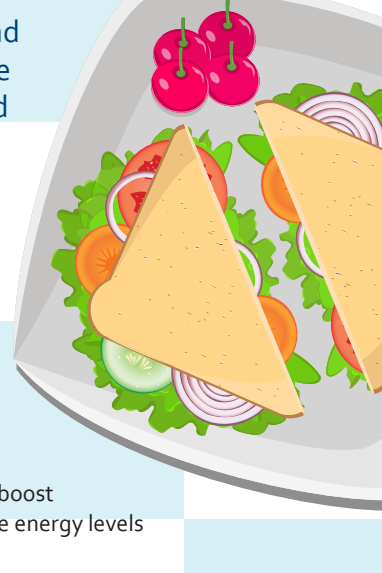
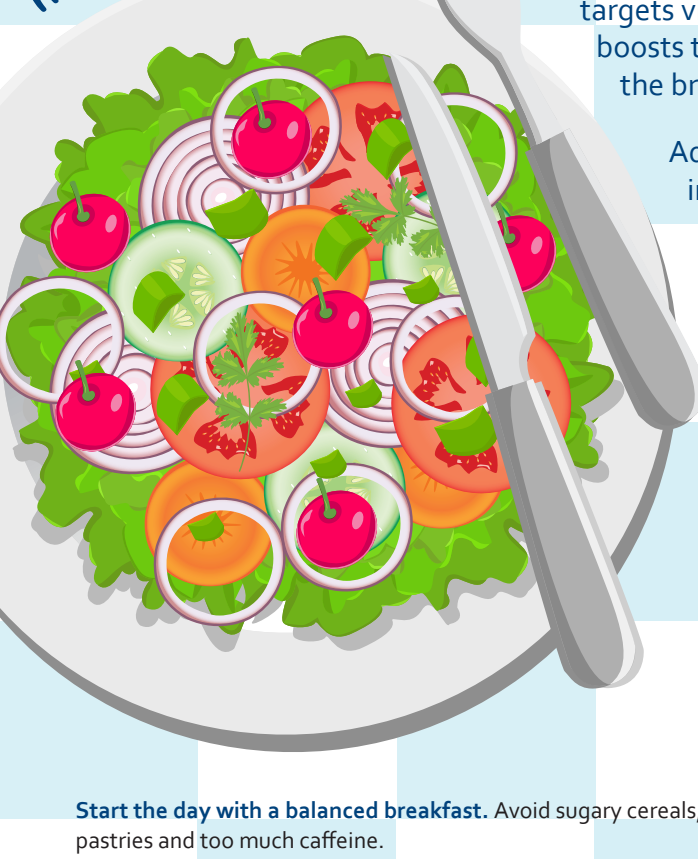
### Emotional eating

Try not to eat when you feel stressed as stress diverts blood flow away from your digestive system so you could experience bloating, gas and become prone to discomfort.

## How diet can help

When you're feeling stressed, your adrenal glands, which are small organs above your kidneys, respond by releasing hormones like adrenaline. Adrenaline targets vital organs, increases the heart rate and boosts the delivery of oxygen and glucose to the brain and muscles.

Adrenal function is significantly influenced by blood sugar levels, so you can help manage stress by managing your blood sugar levels.



Stimulants such as tea and coffee can give you a temporary energy boost but drinking too much may reduce energy levels and nutrients in the long term.

Aim to drink at least 1.5 - 2 litres of water throughout the day. Try swapping your tea or coffee for herbal or fruit teas instead.

Think before you drink. Alcohol can cause imbalances in your blood sugar levels.

**Start the day with a balanced breakfast.** Avoid sugary cereals, pastries and too much caffeine.

**Small, regular meals** will help to maintain energy levels and mood, while reducing tiredness and irritability.

**Choose whole, natural foods** like brown bread, rice and oats, and avoid highly refined foods like white bread, pasta, chocolate and sweets.

**Vitamins B** (particularly B5) and **C** are good for your adrenal glands. Get B5 from wholegrains, nuts and seeds, and C from most fresh fruit and vegetables.

**Watch out for hidden sugars.** These are in many cereals, breads, tinned items and processed or packaged foods.

**Eat a rainbow!** At every meal fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables. Aim for at least five veg portions a day.

**Magnesium is dramatically depleted** in times of stress, and symptoms include fatigue, anxiety and insomnia. Boost your magnesium levels by eating plenty of dark green leafy vegetables, wholegrains, nuts and seeds.

**Prioritise protein** as this helps to slow the release of sugar into the blood stream. Choose lean meat, chicken, fish, eggs, beans, lentils, nuts and seeds in each meal.



### Mood boosting berry banana slush

Try this berry banana slush for a sweet treat that's packed with antioxidant-rich berries and fibre to keep your mind running smoothly.

Prep: 5 mins Serves: 2

**Ingredients:** 2 ripe bananas, 200g frozen berry mix (blackberries, raspberries and currants)

**Method:** Slice the bananas into a bowl and add the frozen berry mix. Blitz with a blender to make a slushy ice and serve straight away in two glasses with spoons.

Find more mood-boosting recipes on [BBC Good Food](#).



Explore your local area with this free walking app

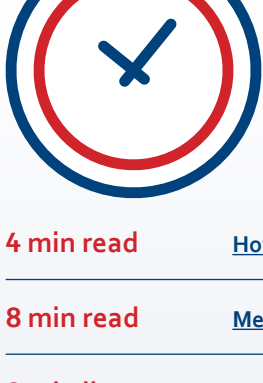


## The benefits of being outside

**Dr. Rangan Chatterjee, a medical doctor, author, television presenter and podcaster, advocates nature as one of the very best medicines for stress. Here's his six reasons why:**

1. It lowers stress levels, reducing levels of the stress hormone cortisol.
2. Studies have shown that being in nature can reduce symptoms of depression.
3. Spending time in nature can help increase attention span and focus.
4. It boosts your immune system. Yes, really! Chemicals that have been shown to have a positive effect on immunity.
5. It increases energy levels and reduces fatigue. If we exercise in nature, rather than in a gym, we tend to exercise for longer. One study found that people who exercise in the outdoors on a regular basis have higher levels of a hormone called serotonin, which reduces tiredness and helps keep us in a happier mood.
6. It lowers disease risk. Data from over 290 million people across 20 countries found that spending time in nature, or living near to it, can help reduce type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure, as well as improve sleep.

[Read more here about the benefits of being outside.](#)



## Time to learn more about how to manage pressure and stress?

Click on the links below.

- 4 min read** [How to de-stress at work](#)
- 8 min read** [Meditation for stress management](#)
- 8 min listen** [How to be mentally strong when you're stressed out](#)
- 15 min listen** [The pressure principle: Handle Stress, Harness Energy, and Perform When It Counts](#)
- 15 min watch** [Ted Talk: How to make stress your friend](#)
- 60 min read** [Stress busters skillbook](#)
- 70 min listen** [Dr Chatterjee, Powerful daily habits to reduce stress and anxiety](#)
- A good book** [The Stress Solution](#). The 4 Steps to reset your body, Mind, Relationships & Purpose.

## Using movement as medicine

Yoga may help with practicing mindfulness – not only is it a great form of exercise but it can help reduce type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure, as well as improve sleep.

**Regular, gentle exercise** is very beneficial for relieving stress and decreasing negative emotions such as worry or anxiety. However, for people with significantly depleted adrenal hormones, intensive cardiovascular exercise may further deplete adrenal reserves. Talk to your GP if it's the first time you're exercising regularly.

**Quick bursts of exercise** are great if your stress is making you feel jittery or like your heart is beating faster than normal. Short, quick exercises (jumping jacks, running on the spot etc) increase your heart rate and activate several neurotransmitters, including dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine that enhance your mood.



## Relieve stress with this five-minute neck and head massage

- Start by kneading the muscles at the back of your neck and shoulders. Make a loose fist and drum swiftly up and down the sides and back of your neck.
- Use your thumbs to work tiny circles around the base of your skull.
- Slowly massage the rest of your scalp with your fingertips.
- Tap your fingers against your scalp, moving from the front to the back and then over the sides.
- Move to massage your face and make a series of tiny circles with your thumbs or fingertips. Pay particular attention to your temples, forehead, and jaw muscles.
- Use your middle fingers to massage the bridge of your nose and work outward over your eye brows to your temples.
- Finally, close your eyes. Cup your hands loosely over your face and inhale and exhale easily for a short while.

## Need extra support?

If you need help to manage pressure and stress, it's really important that you tell your manager or contact one of these sources of support:

- Fleet:** Visit the Medical Centre or contact your [Crew Assistance Programme \(CAP\)](#)
- Shore:** Speak to your GP, [Occupational Health](#) or [Health Hero Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#)
- Log in** and search 'stress' and you'll find almost 40 resources focusing on managing pressure and stress.



Our **Mental health First Aiders and Champions** can provide support and signpost you to additional help if and when you need it.

