

# Self help matters.

Helping you to find your solutions

## Stress Management

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Stress is the “wear and tear” our bodies experience as we adjust to a changing environment. It has physical and emotional effects on us and can create positive or negative feelings. Stress will help or hinder us depending on how we react to or perceive it. Positive stress (or pressure) adds anticipation and excitement to life and we all thrive under a certain amount of it.

Our quest is not to eliminate stress but to learn how to manage it and how to use it to help us. Insufficient pressure may leave us feeling bored or demotivated. Excessive stress may leave us feeling “tied up in knots”. What we need to do is find the optimal level of stress which will individually motivate but not overwhelm us. There is no standard stress level or barometer. We are all unique individuals with unique requirements. What is stress to one may not be to another as we differ in our physiological and psychological responses to it.

## Top Tips

**Awareness.** Identify your stressors and your emotional and physical reactions.

**Meaning.** Determine what stresses you. What are you telling yourself about the meaning of these events?

**Change.** Can you change your stressors by avoiding or eliminating them?

**Exposure.** Can you shorten your exposure to stress - take a break, leave the physical premises, distract yourself, do something different, speak to a friend?

**Dedication.** Can you devote the time and energy necessary to making a change? Goal-setting, time-management techniques and delayed gratification strategies may be helpful here.

**Danger?** The stress reaction is triggered by your perception of danger... physical danger and/or emotional danger. Are you viewing your stressors in exaggerated terms and/or taking a difficult situation and making it seem like a disaster?

**Reality.** Are you overreacting and viewing things as absolutely critical and urgent when they are not?

**Cope.** Can you reassess stress as something to cope with rather than something that overpowers you?

**Perspective.** Put the situation in perspective. Avoid labouring on the negative aspects and the “what if’s”.

**Breath.** Slow, deep breathing will bring your heart rate back to normal.

**Chill.** Relaxation techniques can reduce muscle tension.

**Medications.** When prescribed by a GP, medication can help in the short-term to moderate your physical reactions.

**Fitness.** Exercise for cardiovascular fitness three to four times a week but check first with your GP what is appropriate exercise for you, so you’re not over-doing it.

**Food/weight.** Eat well-balanced, nutritious meals and maintain your ideal weight.

**Stimulants.** Avoid nicotine, excessive caffeine, and other stimulants.

**Relax.** Mix leisure with work. Take breaks and get away when you can.

**Zzzz.** Manage your sleep patterns. Try guided meditations to relax at bedtime.

**Friends.** Develop some mutually supportive friendships/relationships.

## Resources

### MOODZONE

Boost your mood, cope with stress, anxiety or depression or simply improve your overall emotional wellbeing.



**Opening Hours:** Online

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/low-mood-stress-anxiety.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/low-mood-stress-anxiety.aspx)

### LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

Want to know how to feel happier, more confident & worry less right now? Would you like to learn new ways of dealing with what life throws at you?



**Opening Hours:** Online

[www.livinglifetothefull.com](http://www.livinglifetothefull.com)

### THE MIX

Provides free, confidential support for young people under 25 via online, social and mobile.



**Opening Hours:** Online

[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

### MINDFULNESS FOR STUDENTS

Helping you to stay calm, focused & better manage the pressures of student life.



**Opening Hours:** Online

<http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/>

### UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN SERVICES & SUPPORT

A range of support resources for everyone at University



[www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support)

### TOGETHER ALL

Online community of people who are anxious, feeling low or not coping who support and help by sharing what's troubling them. This is a free, online, moderated service and confidential.



**Opening Hours:** Online

<https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>

### If you are experiencing a crisis - please contact any of the following

- **Emergency Services** - telephone 999 (Free) 24 hours
- **Samaritans** - telephone 116 123 (Free) 24 hours
- **Breathing Space** - telephone 0800 83 8587 (Free) Mon-Thu 6pm-2am, Fri-Sun 6pm-6am
- **Nightline** - telephone 01224 272829 (local rate) term-time only, between 20.00-08.00
- **NHS 24** - telephone 111 (Free) 24 hours

For other support resources, please see - [www.abdn.ac.uk/counselling](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/counselling)