



# Workplace Health Guide

## How to Spot Stress at Work

Learn about stress, find out your personal stress score, and explore ideas to help reduce your stress.

**new leaf** health

# What is Stress?

Stress is an incredibly important biological function in humans. The term itself refers to our body's reaction to harmful events or situations, whether real or imagined.

Stress is a biological response that's triggered when we feel a threat - our heart rate increases, breathing becomes faster, muscles tighten and blood pressure rises.

This enables us to act much more quickly in the face of a threat - the "fight or flight" response.

Over long periods of time, though, high levels of stress can have a detrimental effect on our wellbeing, eventually leading to complete burnout.

People have different tolerance levels for stress and what may be insignificant for one person could be overwhelming for someone else.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to spotting the signs of stress in others, but according to mental health charity Mind, staff suffering from overwhelming stress may exhibit the following signs:

- They find it hard to make decisions.
- Constantly worrying.
- Avoid situations that are worrisome.
- Snapping at others.
- Biting nails or picking skin.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Eating too much or too little.
- Smoking or drinking more.
- Restless and unable to sit still.
- Being tearful or crying.



# Stress Symptom Scorecard

Use this checklist to tick any symptoms that you've noticed during the last 6 months. Write your score at the bottom and use the stress level bandings to find out roughly how stressed you are.

## Physical Symptoms

- Headaches (migraine or tension)
- Backaches
- Tight muscles
- Neck and shoulder pain
- Jaw tension and teeth grinding
- Muscle cramps or spasms
- Nervous stomach
- Other pain
- Nausea
- Poor sleep
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Cold hands or feet
- Tightness or pressure in the head
- High blood pressure
- Developing rashes and itchy skin
- Diarrhoea, cramping or bloating
- Stomach pain or stomach ulcers
- Constipation
- Hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar)
- Changes in appetite
- Increased use of alcohol/smoking/drugs
- Frequent colds or other minor illnesses
- Heavy sweating
- Rapid heart rate or palpitations

## Psychological Symptoms

- Anxiety and/or depression
- Confusion or spaciness
- Irrational fears
- Compulsive behaviours
- Forgetfulness
- Feeling overloaded or overwhelmed
- Overeating
- Hyperactivity
- Mood swings
- Loneliness
- Problems with relationships
- Unhappy at work
- Difficulty concentrating
- Frequent irritability
- Restlessness
- Frequent boredom
- Frequent worrying or obsession
- Feeling guilty
- Temper flare-ups
- Spells of tearfulness
- Nightmares
- Apathy
- Sexual problems
- Changes in weight

<h3>My Score:</h3>	<input type="text"/>	<b>Items Checked</b> 0 - 7 8 - 14 15 - 21 22 +	<b>Stress Level</b> Low Moderate High Very High
	Date: <input type="text"/>		

This is a guide and not medical advice. Symptoms can be related to many conditions - always speak to a GP about anything concerning you.

# Tips for Tackling Stress

One of the best ways to deal with stress is to cut it off at the source. Identifying stressors and reducing or eliminating them will ultimately keep your stress levels down.

Realistically, though, stress is a normal part of life and often can't be avoided. But it can be addressed.

The NHS recommends the following 'Stress Busters' to help you tackle stress.

## Be active

Exercise can help to reduce emotional intensity and clear your thoughts, allowing you to tackle problems with more focus and calm.

## Take control

The thought of not being able to do anything about a situation can be one of the main causes of stress.

A key way to reduce this stress can be to find a solution to the situation that meets your needs - helping you feel empowered and in control.

## Connect with people

Having a good support network can help ease your burden - a problem shared is a problem halved, as they say.

Talking things through with people you trust can give you a new perspective, open up new solutions, and allow you to feel less helpless overall.

Plus, catching up with people can help you to relax.

## Have some 'me time'

Working long hours or having a busy family life (or both!) can often leave us with very little time to do things that help us unwind and relax.

Taking time to socialise, relax or exercise is incredibly important, so try setting aside time specifically to do this.

## Challenge yourself

Setting yourself realistic challenges, then reaching these goals, can boost your confidence and help you deal with stress.

It's also a great way to ensure you're active regularly, like setting a target of running once a week.

## Avoid unhealth habits

Alcohol, smoking, caffeine and drugs as coping mechanisms will only create more problems down the line and add to your stress.

## Help other people

Evidence shows that helping others can build resilience.

Even if you don't have time to volunteer, doing simple favours for others can also help boost resilience.

## Work smarter, not harder

Prioritise important tasks in your workload, as these will make a big difference to your stress levels. Leave less important tasks until later, and accept that you won't necessarily get everything done.

## Look at positives

Look for positives in your day-to-day life - things that have gone well and successes that you've had.

Write down a list of things that you're grateful for today and make this practise a daily habit.





## Interested in tackling stress in your workplace?

Stress is a big workplace problem that shouldn't be ignored or dismissed.

At New Leaf Health, we've been working with clients for over 26 years. Time and time again, one of our top requests is for mental health support around stress.

Our [Employee Mental Health Course](#) gives staff skills to tackle stress head-on, as well as giving attendees lots of key mental health skills.

Our [Managing Mental Health Course](#) gives workplace leaders the skills to spot signs and symptoms in staff, and to help prevent mental health problems from developing in the workplace.

Interested in learning more about these course and how they can help your business? Simply get in touch with us using the contact information at the bottom of this page.