

UWE Wellbeing Service

Stress

Stress is a biological and psychological response to threat. It is the body’s way of protecting you. Stress hormones are released to enable you to deal with pressures or threats – the so-called "fight or flight" response. When working properly, it helps you stay focused, energetic and alert. Once the pressure or threat has passed, your hormone levels will usually return to normal. However, if you are constantly under stress, these hormones will remain in your body, leading to the symptoms of stress. People have different ways of reacting to stress, so a situation that feels stressful to one person may be motivating to someone else.

Stress may affect people in some of the ways listed below:

How you might feel	How you might behave	How you might physically react
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritable, impatient, aggressive • Over-burdened • Anxious • Unable to enjoy yourself • Depressed • A sense of dread • Uninterested in life • Feel like crying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding it hard to make decisions • Avoiding situations • Snapping at people • Unable to concentrate • Eating too much or too little • Smoking or drinking alcohol more than usual • Restless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems sleeping • Low energy • Grinding teeth, picking at skin • Headaches • Bowel or bladder problems • Muscle tension or pain • Shallow breathing • Panic attacks

The first step to managing stress is recognising what is causing it. Notice where you are when you feel stressed, what are you doing, who are you with and what changes could be made? Notice what you are specifically worrying about and ask yourself: "Is this something I can solve?" If not, shift your attention to things which are within your control or focus your attention on the here and now. Stress management involves changing the stressful situation when you can; changing your reaction when you can't and taking care of yourself so you can deal with stressful times when it happens.

Finding the Balance

Increase your coping ability - Develop your emotional resilience by using methods e.g. mindfulness, relaxation, exercise, healthy eating and positive thinking.

Reduce Demands - Manage external pressures where possible. This might include saying 'no' more often, practicing time-management and getting support from agencies or people who can help sort out problems.

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Websites

- **Anxiety UK** - provides information, support and understanding via an extensive range of services <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/anxiety-type/stress/>
- **Mind** – national mental health charity with downloadable leaflet on how to manage stress <http://www.mind.org.uk/>
- **NHS website**- provides a range of information on stress, has links to podcasts on topics such as anxiety <http://tinyurl.com/82n2bw4>
- **Get Self Help** - range of self-help resources to deal with stress <http://www.get.qg/stress.htm>

Video links and podcasts

- **NHS videos** – Dr Alan Cohen (NIMHE) explains what stress is and how to recognise it <http://tinyurl.com/lmyguv5>
- **Ted Talk** - describing how our attitude to stress can make the difference in how it affects us <http://tinyurl.com/lur8tnz>
- **Mental Health Foundation**- podcasts covering topics such as relaxation, stress, sleep <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/podcasts-and-videos>

Apps

- **SAM APP** - a self-help anxiety app developed by UWE to help you manage anxiety www.uwe.ac.uk/anxiety
- **Anxiety UK app** - an award winning app for anxiety sufferers <http://tinyurl.com/h7ggytl>
- **Headspace** - Programme of mindfulness delivered in 10 minute sessions. Free basic version with further subscription options. <https://www.headspace.com/>

UWE library

- Looker, T., Gregson, O. (2008) **Managing Stress** Available: [Alexandra Warehouse](#), Bower Ashton, Frenchay, Glenside
- Davis, D. (2008) **The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook** Available on [shelf: Alexandra Warehouse](#), Bower Ashton, Frenchay, Glenside
- Brosan, L. and Todd, G. (2009) **Overcoming stress** Available: [Alexandra Warehouse](#), Frenchay, Glenside
- Tallis, F. (1990) **How to Stop Worrying** Available: [Alexandra Warehouse](#), Bower Ashton, Frenchay, Glenside
- Clark, D.A. & Beck, A.T. (2011) **The Anxiety and Worry Workbook: The Cognitive Behavioural Solution** [Full text online](#)