



Workplace Stress

The symptoms of stress will often accumulate until you are forced to take notice of them.

Don't rationalise the symptoms away, if you are not sure – ask your GP.

Stress can affect the way you think, feel and behave. Any sudden change in any of these can be an indication of stress.

Main Points

These are some of the symptoms that are indicators of too much pressure. Psychological signs

- No longer making time for relaxation or pleasurable activities
- Increased reliance on recreational or illegal drugs
- Changes in attitude to work; poor time management; poor standards of work and absenteeism; or conversely, becoming a “workaholic”
- Lack of confidence or self-esteem, social withdrawal and relationship problems
- Mood swings; angry or aggressive outbursts; feeling nervous; irritable or reckless
- Being defensive or extra sensitive to criticism
- Inability to make a simple decision, lack of motivation, memory lapses and becoming easily distracted

Physical Signs

- Changes in appearance; self-neglect, lack of personal hygiene or appearing tired
- Tension or grinding teeth
- Sudden weight loss or gain
- Muscle aches & pains
- Becoming more prone to colds, flu, illnesses or infections
- Constipation/diarrhoea/IBS
- Indigestion/heartburn/ulcers
- Panic attacks; hyperventilating, feeling of a “lump in the throat”, pins & needles
- Menstrual changes/loss of libido/sexual problems
- Heart problems and high blood pressure

Discussion Points:

Everyone is at risk of stress. Around two people in ten in the UK may suffer from problems caused by it, typically stress can be caused by major life events or changes such as:

- Marriage
 - Bereavement
 - Redundancy
 - Financial and health problems but can also be brought on by smaller events such as:
 - A dreadful day at work
 - A vehicle breakdown
- Some occasional stress is fine, but too much can affect your health.

The 60 second tranquilliser

This is a quick and easy breathing technique to bring about rapid relief when needed.

Using positive thoughts, you will activate the parasympathetic nervous system and help you to switch off your fight/flight reaction. It is the perfect solution to rapidly calm nerves, focus the mind and help you think more clearly.

You can use this simple and powerful exercise at any time you feel worried, tense, nervous or anxious.

Say firmly but silently to yourself “take control”

- Repeat – “I can do anything I want to” and breathe out slowly
- Slowly breathe in through your nose and then out through pursed lips, allowing the abdomen to soften and rise on the in breath then deflate and return to normal on the out breath
- Pause
- Slowly repeat this for 6-8 breaths over the minute with the breath out being slightly longer than the breath in
- Say to yourself each time – I am breathing in peace and blowing away tension
- Each time you breathe out, make sure you relax your face, jaw, shoulders and hands
- If your symptoms persist, repeat this technique for 3-5 minutes until you feel calm and relaxed



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