

Expert advice for managing stress at work

Earlier this month it was International Stress Awareness Week 2022. This year we are all under extreme pressure at work and home; now is the time to consider how to manage stress - to combat overwhelm and protect yourself from burnout and overwhelm.

Leadership, productivity, mentorship, and teamwork experts have been sharing their tips on how to deal with stress both at home and at work.

Daydream your way out of stress

In a stressed-out world, daydreaming is the best-kept secret. It not only helps you think more creatively and clearly, but it also allows the brain to recharge and function at its best. By incorporating daily daydreaming breaks into your routine, you will soon discover that you are producing better work in less time. That is why contrary to popular belief, daydreaming is a serious business.

Daydreaming can be a lifesaver when it comes to dealing with stress. The best way to activate the type of daydreaming that inspires great thinking is to engage in a task that requires relaxed attention, such as walking, running, doodling, or even washing up!

It's crucial to distinguish between daydreaming and worrying or overthinking. Going over the same ideas in your thoughts repeatedly is not the same as letting your mind wander. It won't help to take a break from work just to spend the entire time worrying about work.

The prospect of taking a break when you are already feeling under time pressure can be intimidating. It is important to remember that not all work is created equal – long hours spent at your desk do not guarantee high output.

[Chris Griffiths](#) and Caragh Medlicott, authors of *The Creative Thinking Handbook*. Chris is also the founder of the productivity app [AYOA](#).

Develop an “Enough mindset”

Stress at work often starts with a sense that you lack something, or don't have the resources to do what is required of you. When you notice that you are coming from this place, pause, take a breather, and see if you can replace the sense of scarcity with a sense of being enough. Believing that you are enough means that you replace a sense of lack – chasing the ever-hungry, never-satisfied state of striving – with a state of fullness, from which you can thrive.

Try keeping an 'appreciation and gratitude' journal – something you have done in the day that you are pleased with. It doesn't have to be perfect (things very rarely are), but something that you feel good about. Then thank yourself for doing it.

This will help you to build your inner belief that you ARE enough, exactly as you are. Knowing that you are enough gives you permission to put in place the boundaries that we all so desperately need to live and work healthily.

[Becky Hall](#) is an accredited life coach, leadership consultant and is the author of *The Art of Enough* published by Practical Inspiration.

Be a team player

Teamwork can play an important role in reducing workplace stress, especially if the work is done remotely. We believe that by working more collaboratively and engaging in more cooperative dialogue with teammates, we can improve both our own and others' mental health.

Here are a few characteristics of an approachable team player. For starters, they are relational. This means they make connections with others and encourage others to contribute ideas. This is a component of emotional

intelligence, which is the ability to detect, tune in to, and respond skillfully to the emotions of team members.

They provide context, receive other people's contributions, and gain a better understanding of what's going on by working collaboratively with others. This all boils down to the most important quality: they have honed their soft skills. "Soft" skills like listening, questioning, observation, summarising, testing, understanding, and clarifying are all important in helping to create a team culture that is open, communicative, and ultimately less stressful for all involved.

Fiona Elsa Dent and Mike Brent are global leadership experts and co-authored [*When Teams Work: How to Develop and Lead a High-Performing Team*](#), with former England Rugby Captain, Nigel Melville.

Get your body moving

I think there is no better way to manage stress at work than to start your day with exercise. The more physically exhausting the better too. It might seem counterintuitive, but if you physically attack yourself with hardcore exercise every morning, the worst part of the day is always over first.

Even if you just go for a brisk walk in the morning, you'll get the blood pumping, and the endorphins flowing, and you'll kick into gear so you can hit the ground running when it's time for work. Personally, though, I find lifting weights works best. After a heavy weights session, I am 100% confident that nothing and nobody during my day will push me as far as I just pushed myself. Going into your day with this mindset leaves you feeling like an absolute boss and ready to take on the world.

[*Elliot Wise*](#) is a self-made serial entrepreneur, business growth expert and mentor. He is the founder of [*Limitless Mentoring*](#) – an entrepreneurial skills programme for aspiring business leaders.

A four step guide against stress

Do you ever wish you possessed a release valve when stress is escalating, and you fear you may explode? Remember four things.

First, look at your to-do list. Create your NOT to-do list and concentrate on what is important *now*.

Second, train your mind not to ruminate on stressful issues or outcomes. Don't

think about potential disasters, and don't distract yourself with 'what-ifs', while relentlessly attacking those items that *must* be handled now. Detach yourself from concentrating on anything except the stress-producing task to eliminate as much as possible.

Third, imagine if your anxiety-producing situation will matter tomorrow, next month or in a year. Usually 99% of the time, it won't. Think back to the things that were giving you angst a year ago. Can you remember them? Often, we can't, so grab that sense of calm that knowledge can give you *now*.

Last, tell your reality-check buddy about what is making you stressed. That's the person who tells you truthfully if you are seeing the situation clearly, the *real* facts or just the fear if you have inflated anything in your head or are imagining outcomes that are not likely. Often, we lose our equilibrium under stress, efficiently producing the outcome we fear – more stress.

Jill Bausch is a coach, philanthropic strategist, facilitator, social impact advisor and author of [Why Brave Women Win](#), published by Leaders Press.