

Coping with stress

A 12-step guide to reducing your stress levels

1. Do not work more than 10 hours a day
2. Take one and a half days away from your normal work routine each week
3. Take regular breaks during the day and allow at least half an hour for each meal
4. Take exercise at least three times a week
5. Use a relaxation technique twice a day
6. Set aside some time each day to be by yourself – listen to music, have a relaxing bath or just take time out to be quiet
7. Do not set or accept personal deadlines that you cannot keep. Most things can actually wait until tomorrow.
8. Get sufficient sleep each night. Do something to relax you before going to bed and avoid drinking tea and coffee during the evening.
9. Eat a healthy balanced diet and reduce your daily caffeine intake
10. Drink alcohol in moderation – it can act as a depressant and disturb sleep
11. Have a complete break away from everything at least once a year
12. Do something for fun at least once a week

Remember: Managing stress means learning new skills – and like all skills they need to be practised regularly.