

The 10 top tips for managing stress

Chamber member and resident coach, Cheryl Donnison (pictured) examines tried and tested methods of combating one of the nation's most debilitating problems.



First the bad news: stress affects us all. The more you try not to have it, the more likely you are to experience it.

But now for the good news. There are genuine ways in overcoming the challenge of stress, the UK's most prevalent workplace problem. The key to success is finding a technique that works best for you.

Here are ten useful ways to combat stress in its many guises. You may find one technique works better than others for your personal situation or your best and fastest route to success may involve a combination of two or more of these methods.

- **Exercise** – Regular exercise is one of the best ways to manage stress.
- **Relaxation** – Listen to your favourite soothing music, read a novel or take a long bath. Practice meditation, or spend some quiet reflection time, yoga, aromatherapy or massage.
- **Stress diary** – Become aware of stress-inducing factors by writing down events that were stressful to you. This can help you to adopt effective coping strategies to manage the causes of stress in your life.
- **Organisation and prioritisation: be realistic** – Prioritise what you need to accomplish during the day and tick-off each item as you finish them. Time management is a key step to keeping tabs on stress levels.
- **Delegate** – Learn to delegate tasks and responsibilities at home and at work, and learn to say “No”.
- **Stop smoking, limit alcohol consumption** – Smoking affects the ability of the coronary arteries to respond to stress. A recent study found that smokers, on average, had about 14 per cent less blood flow to the heart compared to non-smokers. Alcohol disturbs regular sleep patterns and disguises the cause of stress without eliminating them.
- **Sleep** – It is hard to work efficiently when you are tired, and that can prove stressful.
- **Talk about it** – Friends can provide support and guidance to help reduce stress and enhance your sense of well-being.
- **Diet** – Maintain a healthy, balanced diet – but don't get too stressed about it!
- **Laugh** – Psychologists say laughter boosts the immune system and lowers stress levels.

➤ For further information contact Cheryl on 01943 605 597.