

How can I be more resilient?

Taking steps to look after your wellbeing can help you deal with pressure, and reduce the impact that stress has on your life.

This is sometimes called developing emotional resilience. Resilience is not just your ability to bounce back, but also your capacity to adapt in the face of challenging circumstances, whilst maintaining a stable mental wellbeing.

Resilience isn't a personality trait – it's something that we can all take steps to achieve.

For example, you can:

Make some lifestyle changes

Look after your physical health

Give yourself a break

Build your support network

Make some lifestyle changes

There are some general changes that you can make to your lifestyle that could help you feel more able to cope with pressure and stressful situations.

Practise being straightforward and assertive in communicating with others. If people are making unreasonable or unrealistic demands on you, be prepared to tell them how you feel and say no.

Use relaxation techniques. You may already know what helps you relax, like having a bath, listening to music or taking your dog for a walk. If you know that a certain activity helps you feel more relaxed, make sure you set aside time to do it.

Develop your interests and hobbies. Finding an activity that's completely different from the things causing you stress is a great way to get away from everyday pressures. If stress is making you feel lonely or isolated, shared hobbies can also be a good way to meet new people.

Make time for your friends. When you've got a lot on this might seem hard, but it can help you feel more positive and less isolated. Chatting to friends about the things you find difficult can help you keep things in perspective – and you can do the same for them. Laughing and smiling with them will also produce hormones that help you to relax.

Find balance in your life. You may find that one part of your life, such as your job or taking care of young children, is taking up almost all of your time and energy. Try making a decision to focus some of your energy on other parts of your life, like family, friends or hobbies. It's not easy, but this can help spread the weight of pressures in your life, and make everything feel lighter.

Look after your physical health

Taking steps to look after your physical health can help you to look after your mental health and reduce feelings of stress.

Get enough sleep. Stress can often make it difficult to sleep, and can cause sleep problems. Getting enough sleep can help you feel more able to deal with difficult situations.

Be active. Being physically active is important for both our physical and mental health. Even making small changes such as going for a regular walk outside may help you to feel less stressed.

Eat healthily. When you're stressed, it can be tempting to skip meals or eat too much of the wrong kinds of food. But what you eat, and when you eat, can make a big difference to how well you feel.

Give yourself a break

Learning to be kinder to yourself in general can help you control the amount of pressure you feel in different situations, which can help you feel less stressed.

Reward yourself for achievements – even small things like finishing a piece of work or making a decision. You could take a walk, read a book, treat yourself to food you enjoy, or simply tell yourself "well done".

Get a change of scenery. You might want to go outside, go to a friend's house or go to a café for a break – even if it's just for a short time.

Take a break or holiday. Time away from your normal routine can help you relax and feel refreshed. Even spending a day in a different place can help you feel more able to face stress.

Resolve conflicts, if you can. Although this can sometimes be hard, speaking to a manager, colleague or family member about problems in your relationship with them can help you find ways to move forward.

Forgive yourself when you feel you have made a mistake, or don't achieve something you hoped for. Try to remember that nobody's perfect, and putting extra pressure on yourself doesn't help.

Build your support network

Remember that whatever you're going through that's causing you stress, you don't have to cope with it alone.

Friends and family. Sometimes just telling the people close to you how you're feeling can make a big difference – and they might be able to help you out in other ways too.

Support at work, such as your line manager, human resources (HR) department, union representatives, or employee assistance schemes. Try not to worry that talking to your manager or colleagues about stress will be seen as a sign of weakness – your wellbeing is important and responsible employers will take it seriously.

If you're worried that the culture in your workplace might not be very supportive, you might find it helpful to take a look at:

Time to Change's resources on stress, depression and mental health support at work

Peer support. Sometimes sharing your experiences with people who've been through something similar can help you feel less alone.