



# Stress awareness and men's mental health

# Stress Awareness and Men's Mental Health

**1st November 2021 marks the start of International Stress Awareness Week (1st -5th November). Over recent years, International Stress Awareness Week has turned into a large scale, annual event to focus on stress management, assist with stress prevention and aims to remove the stigmas associated with stress and mental health issues.**

Stress is normal and, to some extent, a very necessary part of life. In fact, often a small amount of stress can drive us to get things done, as long as it is harnessed in the right way.

However, what happens when we're no longer able to harness stress to our advantage? What happens when that feeling of stress becomes all-encompassing? When we can't think about anything else? What happens when that stress simply feels out of control? That's the time when we need to recognise that it's time to seek help.

In general, the most common causes of stress tend to be fivefold:

- 1 Financial problems
- 2 Work
- 3 Personal relationships
- 4 Parenting
- 5 Daily life

**Stress can affect our body and our mind in many ways. Too much stress can affect our mood, our mental health and our relationships. It can make us feel anxious, on edge, irritable, and affect our self-esteem too. When we are stressed, we may find ourselves starting to withdraw from those around us. Often in this situation, the things that we find 'pleasurable' end up going to the bottom of the pile. But the key thing to remember, is that it's those more pleasurable activities that allow us the breathing space we need to switch off from the stressors and ultimately recharge our batteries.**



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If you are feeling stressed, **consider the following 3 tips:**



## Get moving.

Even a little regular exercise can help ease stress, boost your mood and energy, and improve your self-esteem.

Aim for 30 minutes on most days, broken up into short 10-minute bursts if that's easier.



## Practice a relaxation technique.

Take time to relax each day and give your mind a break from the constant worrying.

Meditating, breathing exercises, or other relaxation techniques are excellent ways to relieve stress and restore some balance to your life.



## Don't skimp on sleep.

Feeling tired will only increase your stress and negative thought patterns. Finding ways to improve your sleep during this difficult time will help both your mind and body.

## Try this today: A mindfulness technique to release stress

It's time to take a breather. Just take a moment to concentrate on the here and now and take slow deep breaths (in through your nose and out through your mouth) for a couple of minutes.

**Now use your five senses. What can you hear, what can you see, what can you smell, touch and taste?**

Relay these details back to yourself and be present. Notice what is around you.

Take a minute to get up. Have a quick change of scenery (perhaps get a glass of water) and then re-focus back to the task at hand.

## Did you know?

