

Many of us are faced with stress daily, but we might not know how to deal with it. It is important to learn how to handle stress because it can affect our performance and relationships. **At work**, stress can lead to distraction and cause an unfortunate accident. **At home**, stress can put a strain on family relationships.

People react and deal with stress differently, but common stress symptoms include upset stomach, fatigue, tight neck muscles, irritability and headaches.

Some people react to stress by eating or drinking too much, losing sleep or smoking/vaping. Stress may also make you more susceptible to illnesses, including the common cold, ulcers, and some cancers.

### How Stress Affects Work

There are many negative effects when someone carries stress to work. A couple examples include:

1. **Lack of focus.** Dealing with any of the above stressors is obviously going to come with a mental load. Constantly giving thought to a stressful situation takes your mind off the task at hand.
2. **Strain on work relationships.** Stress can cause a person to shut down or become angry towards those around them. This situation negatively affects communication between co-workers. Lack of communication or teamwork can lead to injury.

### How to Deal with Stress

There is no one size fits all solution for dealing with stress, everyone is different and how we each deal with stress will vary. Some quick ideas:

- **Recognize what is truly bothering you.** From there it is less difficult to attempt to find solutions in dealing with it. Also recognizing the stressor can help you separate your anger towards a situation or person at home from those around you at work.
- **Take action to mitigate or eliminate the stressor.** Not all stressors can be eliminated, but our reaction and how we face it can be improved.
  1. **Acceptance** - Many of us worry about things we have no control over. For example, a family illness, great deal of change at work. One way to manage stress is to accept when things are beyond your control
  2. **Attitude** - Try to focus on the positive side of situations. Solutions come easier when you focus on the positive and your stress level will be reduced.
  3. **Perspective** - We often worry about things that never happen. Ask yourself, "How important is this situation? Can I do anything about it?"
- **Have a conversation** with a loved one, friend, or coworker about the issue.
- **Have hobbies or other ways to relax.** Everyone needs a mental break from work and any stress caused at home.

WHO handout: <https://www.epi-win.com/all-resources/coping-with-stress-during-the-covid-19-outbreak>

CDC suggestions:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>