

Statistics On Stress: What You Can Do To Minimise Workplace Stress

By Lyndsay Swinton

The recently published UK [statistics on stress](#) make troubling reading.

- Around 1 in 6 considers their work to be very or extremely stressful.
- The average stress, depression or anxiety related case lasts just over 30 working days and is the single biggest factor contributing to work-related ill health
- Stress is the second most commonly reported reason for work related ill health, coming in behind musco-skeletal problems.

In short, work-related stress is a major cause of ill health. Ill staff are absent from work for long periods, and when they are at work, their performance is likely to be compromised. This issue is compounded by increased demands on workers "left behind" who are often forced to carry on regardless.

Some professions are more likely to experience high levels of stress at work - nurses, teachers, medical professionals, police and armed forces all report high work related stress. Also, certain age groups experience greater stress, with 45-54 year old females being the most susceptible group.

In general factors intrinsic to the job such as;

- demand,
- control,
- support,
- job role ambiguity,
- work relationships
- and changes at work

are reported as participating factors for most of the cases of mental ill-health reported

This indicated significantly increased risk of self-reported work-related stress, depression or anxiety for those reporting;

- higher workloads,
- more tight work deadlines,
- lack of support at work and
- being physically attacked or threatened at work.

What You Can Do To Minimise Workplace Stress

Pressure at work is good. It helps you perform and achieve things you may not otherwise. But when the pressure is greater than your ability to cope, then it's time to assess your lifestyle and see what you can do to minimise stress.

Do a simple check of your current lifestyle - have you started to;

- eat on the run, skip meals or load up on junk food
- smoke or drink more
- rush around, always be available to everyone
- doing several jobs at once
- miss breaks, work longer hours or take work home
- stop exercise, relaxation or other non work related activities.

This may happen now and again, but if it becomes the norm, you are risking your long term physical and mental health. The stress source may be work related or personal, or a blend of both, but the key is talking to someone about it and taking action to take the pressure off.

High achievers often have a difficult relationship with stress. They feel that reducing pressure is a sign of failure or weakness. But a rested, nourished body and mind will be far more productive and successful in the long run.

Managers have a responsibility to their staff and themselves, ensuring work is;

- achievable
- realistic timeframes
- adequately resourced
- safe and legal

This can be a tough call when redundancies are looming and business livelihoods are at risk. If this is the situation, you need to seriously consider how to minimise stress. Can you have more communication with your staff in periods of uncertainty or can you eliminate non essential work?

For further advice and guidelines on how to minimise workplace stress, see the [UK](#)

[Health and Safety Executive Guidelines](#)

Don't become a statistic. Stress is bad for business. Take action to keep yourself and your staff in the group who find workplace stress less severe and maintain your physical and mental well-being.

Recommended [Stress Resource](#)

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