

# YOURHEALTH

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**Duradiamond**  
Building Healthy Business



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# HOW'S YOUR WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

Blurring the boundaries between work and personal life can affect people's sense of wellbeing and lead to exhaustion.

A recent study (1) looked at how people managed the boundaries between their work and non-work lives, e.g. how often they took work home, how often they worked at weekends and how often they thought about work during their time off.

They found employees who did not organise a clear separation between work and free time, were less likely to participate in activities that could help them relax and recover from work demands. They were, therefore, more exhausted and experienced a lower sense of balance and wellbeing in the different key aspects of their lives.

Signs of a poor work-life balance include:

- Feeling unhappy about the time devoted to work
- Neglecting other aspects of your life because of work
- Feeling depressed, anxious or irritable
- Thinking about work a lot outside work hours
- Working longer hours than you should
- Constantly juggling life and work
- Work having a negative affect on your personal life including home life and relationships.

## ENSURING A GOOD MIX: TOP TIPS...

- Switch off your phone outside work! And do you really need to check those emails?
- Speak up when demands are too much - take responsibility for your work-life balance
- Work smart, not long. Learn effectiveness
- Take proper breaks at work, e.g. at least 30 minutes for lunch
- Take a break out of the workplace if you can
- If you do need to bring work home, use a certain room and then close the door on it
- Try to reduce stress through exercise, relaxation or hobbies
- Don't sacrifice exercise, leisure activities and friendships for the sake of work
- Keep track of how long you are working: it can creep up.



References: 1. Work-Life Boundaries and Well-Being: Does Work-to-Life Integration Impair Well-Being through Lack of Recovery? Journal of Business and Psychology Dec 2017; 2. Perkbox Workplace Stress Survey 2018

# STRESS AFFECTS US ALL AT SOME POINT

## The numbers:

- 59% of workers experience stress – the highest figure in a decade
- Only 9% say they never have work-related stress
- One in five experience moderate to high levels of stress several times a week
- Long working hours affect the same number (2).

Mental health issues at work should be everyone's concern: there is no "us and them" – because we all have mental health and it should be treated as an asset and protected in our workplaces.

## WHAT IS STRESS?

When you're stressed, your body thinks it's under attack.

It switches to "fight or flight" mode, releasing hormones and chemicals such as adrenaline or cortisol, to prepare the body for physical action.

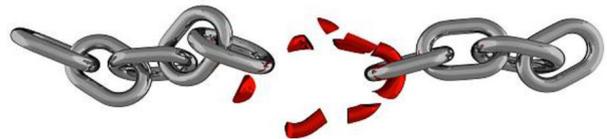
This causes reactions ranging from blood being diverted to muscles, to shutting down unnecessary bodily functions like digestion.

The problem occurs when our body gets stressed in inappropriate situations.

When blood flow is going only to the most important muscles needed to fight or flee, brain function is minimised.

This can mean you can't think straight and, in turn, this can affect your work and home life.

Prolonged stress can make people ill and can contribute to heart disease, hypertension and high blood pressure. It also affects the immune system, is linked to strokes, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, ulcers, diabetes, muscle and joint pain and more.



## HOW CAN WE REDUCE IT?

- Make your health and wellbeing a priority: there is only one you!
- Try to get a good night's sleep
- Practice deep breathing, relaxation or meditation
- Stay hydrated and cut down on caffeine & alcohol
- Eat for wellbeing: get your five a day and eat regular meals
- Get moving to combat stress. Exercise releases chemicals that can reduce stress levels
- Adopt a positive mind set and break work into small, achievable tasks
- Don't be a slave to tech - do you really need to check that mobile?
- Learn to say no: know your limits
- Talk to someone: often just having a chat about how you are feeling can make you feel so much better.

Other sources: Mental Health Foundation, [www.stress.org.uk](http://www.stress.org.uk), [www.healthywomen.org](http://www.healthywomen.org), NHS