

Better ways to cope...

Cut yourself some slack

It's okay to be stressed sometimes – it happens to everyone. What's important is to deal with it in positive ways.

Get sweaty

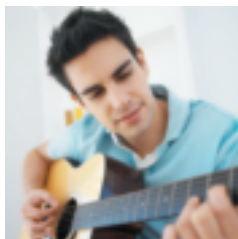
Physical activity can help to improve the way we feel about ourselves and our bodies, boost mood and concentration, aid sleep and reduce reactions to stress. Aim to get sweaty and out of breath for at least 30 minutes, three times a week. It'll help improve your general health and fitness too.



If you have any concerns about your health talk to your doctor or practice nurse before becoming more active.

Do something you enjoy

Do something engaging that stops you thinking about daily concerns for a while, like playing sport or making music. Taking regular breaks stops things getting on top of us – and makes life more fun!



Share your worries

Talking through problems helps get worries in perspective. Don't want to talk to people who know you? Call a confidential helpline like Breathing Space (details overleaf). Writing things down can help too.

Learn to say 'no'

Be clear about where your limits are and how much you can realistically take on. If you say 'yes' to everything and break down under the pressure, you'll be of no use to anyone (yourself included).

Plan ahead

Heading for a difficult period like exams, changes at work or moving house? Factor in plenty of time for relaxation and fun to compensate.

Work stress

Talk to your manager about reducing your workload or getting extra training or help. Responsible employers strive to keep pressure on their workers to a minimum.

Problem solving

Stress is often caused by problems in our lives. Pinpoint what they are and identify small steps you can take to improve the situation. Doing something positive to solve our problems usually helps us feel better.

For more top tips on beating stress, visit www.wellscotland.info/stress-busting.html

Worried about your drinking?

Call **DRINKLINE** free on **0800 7 314 314** at any time.

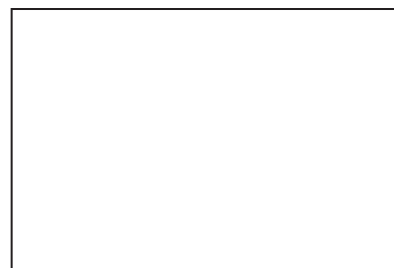
Need to talk?

Call **Breathing Space** free on **0800 83 85 87** (6pm - 2am).

Further information

Call **DRINKLINE** to order free copies of other leaflets in this series. Topics include young people, women and alcohol, healthy living, sensible drinking and how to recognise problem drinking.

For more tips and information about alcohol, visit www.infoscotland.com/alcohol

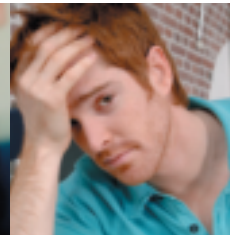


Alcohol and stress

Find out why alcohol can make stress worse and learn about better ways to cope.



We all need at least 2 days a week without alcohol.



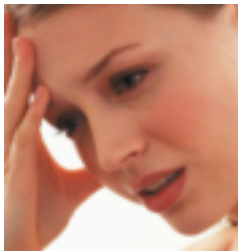
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What is 'stress'?

Stress happens when the pressure and challenges of our lives exceed our ability to cope. Stress isn't a physical problem but it can make us prone to physical and mental illness. In addition, some of the ways people cope with stress such as changing eating habits, smoking or drinking, further reduce well-being in the long term.

How do I know if I'm stressed?

Stress can affect us in many ways. It can affect our thoughts, feelings and behaviour. It can also affect us physically. Symptoms include: racing heartbeat, worrying a lot, being short-tempered, aches and pains, sleep problems, exhaustion, feeling you can't cope, stomach upsets, changes in appetite, headaches, needing to go to the toilet more, feeling 'jumpy', loss of interest in friends, sex and hobbies. All of these symptoms can have physical causes. If in doubt, consult your doctor.



Alcohol and stress

Modern life can be very stressful. Many people use alcohol to relax and to combat the effects of stress.



However using alcohol in this way can lead to problems:

- the more we drink, the more drink we need to feel 'relaxed' – this can lead to dependency
- hangovers make concentration harder and even simple tasks more difficult
- alcohol disrupts sleep, leaving us tired and irritable
- knowing we're drinking too much can be stressful in itself
- alcohol can make feelings of anxiety and depression worse
- drinking can result in stressful financial difficulties

A vicious circle...

If we drink to try and cope with stress, the negative effects of alcohol will only make our stress worse.



Keep going like that and a serious problem with alcohol, our physical or mental health - or all three - is sure to follow.

Sensible limits

If we stick to sensible limits, it's unlikely drinking alcohol will increase our stress.

Men:

No more than 3-4 units a day and no more than 21 units in one week.

Women:

No more than 2-3 units a day and no more than 14 units a week.



We all need at least 2 days a week without alcohol.

How many units in a drink?

	35ml measure gin/rum/vodka/whisky:	1.4 units
	330ml bottle standard lager/beer:	1.7 units
	1 pint medium strength lager/beer:	2.8 units
	1 pint standard lager/beer:	2.3 units
	1 pint strong cider:	3.4 units
	700ml bottle whisky:	28 units
	275ml bottle alcopop:	1.5 units
	175ml glass standard size wine:	2.1 units
	750ml bottle wine:	9.8 units

The units above are **average** levels – the strength of drinks varies by brand. Many display their unit content on the label to help you drink at a sensible level.