

Coping in the moment and beyond

This bite size guide highlights some of the key areas from the full [‘Building your own resilience, health and wellbeing’](#) guide to provide you with some quick support on how to build your own resilience. You can download the full guide to read about these areas in more detail.

Coping in-the-moment

In-the-moment pressure can arise from everyday situations such as being late to work, being short staffed or facing last minute demands.

When is it a problem?

Too much in-the-moment pressure makes people misread situations and react inappropriately, which can have consequences that last well beyond the moment. Repeated often enough, in-the-moment pressure also becomes a health risk.

People’s reactions to pressure vary, but here are some typical early signs. Learning to recognise these early signs is one of the most important stages in developing resilience. It enables you to take action before the threat becomes overwhelming.

Physical	Digestive problems, nausea, light headedness, dry mouth, heart pounding, rashes or flushing
Emotional	Immediate emotional judgement, short temper, feeling overwhelmed, paranoia
Behavioural	Procrastinating, neglecting responsibilities, nervous habits such as pacing, nail biting
Thinking	Inability to concentrate, seeing only the negative, constant worrying, self-blame, poor judgement

Task: What are your early signs?

Take a moment to think about what your early signs are.

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Task: How are you coping at the moment?

Develop your self-awareness with this widely used self-assessment test*.

At work in the last month, how often you have felt...	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
Upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	0	1	2	3	4
Unable to control important things in your job?	0	1	2	3	4
Nervous and 'stressed'?	0	1	2	3	4
Unsure about your ability to handle problems in your job?	0	1	2	3	4
Things are not going your way?	0	1	2	3	4
You can't cope with all the things that you have to do?	0	1	2	3	4
Unable to control irritations in your job?	0	1	2	3	4
That you're not on top of things?	0	1	2	3	4
Angry because of things that are outside your control?	0	1	2	3	4
Difficulties are piling up so high that you can't overcome them?	0	1	2	3	4
Add up your scores in each column	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Now add all your scores together for an overall score	<input type="text"/>				

Add up your score

- 0-10** You feel able to cope with pressure at work – you may be practising resilient behaviours already.
- 11-14** You're coping with pressure at work most, but not all, of the time – start developing your resilience now.
- 15-18** You're only coping with pressure at work some of the time – this may be affecting your judgement, behaviour and relationships at work; over time, feeling like this may start to affect your health.
- 19+** You feel overwhelmed by pressure at work – feeling like this will affect your judgement, behaviour and relationships at work, and is likely to damage your health. If you're worried about your health, see a Doctor. Please note this questionnaire is not a professional diagnosis.

*Adapted from the Perceived Stress Scale developed by Dr Sheldon Cohen, Carnegie Mellon University.

Strategies to cope with in-the-moment pressure

Here's some simple but highly effective techniques to relax, become more self-aware and regain control of your thoughts and feelings.

Techniques to relax

- **Breathe** - Breathe in for a count of seven, and out for a count of 11.
- **Tighten, then relax** - Tighten all your muscles for a count of three, then let go.
- **Movement** - A quick walk, going up and down stairs, or stretching

Techniques to manage your thoughts and emotions

- **Step out of the stressful situation** - Literally walk away and give your attention to something else, even if only for a moment.
- **Talk to a colleague** - Putting things into words to another person gives you distance and helps you calm down.
- **Notice what you're feeling** - Take a step back, become aware of your feelings; accepting them puts you back in charge and lets you move on.
- **Break the cycle** - When you have negative thoughts, deliberately turn your attention to something positive. This is a great distraction technique that takes you to a place that reaffirms the good things in your life.

Know your limits and when to seek help

Being resilient is not about being self-sufficient. Resilience is about thriving under pressure and sourcing help when you need it.

Task: What are your limits?

Use this exercise to become more aware of your limits. If possible, do the exercise with a colleague. Observe yourself over the course of a week. Notice when you feel pushed beyond your limits. At the end of each day, reflect on what happened.

Think through:

- the situation – what happened, what led up to it, who else was involved and how did you feel at the time
- how it affected you – what buttons it pushed, the thoughts that went through your head, the feelings you experienced and how you reacted physically
- the demand – what was actually being asked of you
- how you responded – what options you felt you had at that moment, how you chose to respond and what prompted you to respond that way
- what the result was – for you and for others
- what other ways you could have responded
- what you can learn from the experience about your limits and how to respect them.

Jot down your answers in bullet form. At the end of the week, get together with a colleague or friend and explain to each other what you've learned about recognising and respecting your limits.

Download the full guide [‘Building your own resilience, health and wellbeing’](#) for more information, ideas and tips.