



Keeping calm in stressful situations

It's National Stress Awareness Day on Wednesday 6th November and we are discussing Keeping calm in stressful situations.

The S word. We're all guilty of saying it aren't we? "I'm so stressed" but is that a true reflection of what we mean or how we feel? It's perhaps easier to think about **stress** as being in **distress**. In distress you could feel overwhelmed, unable to cope, lose complete control and may have a panic attack.

Stress is largely a physiological reaction to a situation or event we perceive as threatening or harmful to our health. When placed in harm's way our flight or fight response is activated. This response sharpens up our awareness, narrows vision, increases our heart rate and gives us an extra boost of energy to stand up to the threat or run away from it. It essentially acts as your accelerator in a car.

When the threat has passed our bodies engage "rest and digest" mode applying the brakes to the situation. Many people find it difficult to apply the brakes. Their bodies stay revved up. If their engine is idling too high for too long they are at risk of becoming chronically distressed.

So what can you do to remain calm in stressful situations to avoid blowing a gasket?

- ▶ Accept what you can't change. Focus your energy only on the things you can control.
- ▶ Prioritise your to-do list. Be realistic about your capabilities and don't take on too much.
- ▶ Change your thinking style. We can't always control what happens to us, but we can often choose how we respond.
- ▶ Learn to always see the positives in the situation.
- ▶ It's good to talk. Don't bottle feelings up. Very few things are solved by not talking about them.
- ▶ Stop, think and breathe. Try to avoid reacting straight away. Take some time to fully process the situation.
- ▶ Don't neglect healthy lifestyle habits. The situation will probably be worse if it is fuelled by lack of sleep, too much alcohol and a poor diet.
- ▶ Practice relaxation exercises, meditation and mindfulness. *Mindful* practice of paying attention to the present moment helps us control the racing, repetitive and non-productive thoughts that lead to *stress*.

In the workplace...

You can prepare for National Stress Awareness Day by creating a Stress Awareness Space

The idea from mind.org.uk is to offer employees a comfortable area where they can share their thoughts and feelings when they are feeling stressed. It can make a huge difference to employees sharing how they are feeling with friends and colleagues. By sharing they could get some great advice and tips or find out how to get support.



Save the date:

14th November - World Diabetes Day



Healthy packed lunch idea

Ingredients:

- (2 people)
- Grated zest half a lemon
- Pinch black pepper
- 20ml extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 180g ripe cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters
- 8cm cucumber, chopped
- 1 x 400g tin chickpeas in water, drained (drained weight 240g)
- 1 x 200g tin tuna in water, drained (drained weight 150g)
- 150g salad leaves/lettuce
- 2 lemon wedges

Method:

1. Add the lemon zest to a large bowl with the pepper, and olive oil.
2. Next, add the red onion, tomatoes and cucumber, mix well and leave to infuse for a couple of minutes.
3. Add the chickpeas and tuna, and fold in gently so everything is coated with the dressing.
4. Finally, toss in the salad leaves and divide between two lunch boxes, packed with a lemon wedge to squeeze over before eating.

Quote of the month

“ You learn something every day if you pay attention. ”
Ray Leblond