



10 Tips to Tackle National Stress Awareness Day

National Stress Awareness Day was on 1st November each year. However, stress has been a prevalent and overarching theme for most of 2020. Anxiety, uncertainty and isolation has meant that stress levels have risen dramatically.

For most, our way of life has changed without choice, with our mental health being left in the wings and only now beginning to play catch-up.

High stress levels can cause an array of physical and psychological symptoms. Establishing a balanced lifestyle will help to decrease stress and alleviate symptoms.

Lifestyle balance includes:

1. Eating a balanced and healthy diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, lean protein and wholegrains.
2. Eating regularly, and not going more than 5 hours without a meal or snack.
3. Consuming alcohol in moderation – no more than 14 units per week for both men and women, to be spread throughout the week with at least 2 consecutive alcohol free days.
4. Getting restful sleep of 7-9 hours each night – limiting caffeine and alcohol before bed will help to improve your sleep quality.
5. Exercising regularly – at least 150 mins of moderate aerobic exercise with at least 2 days of strength exercises each week (150 mins of moderate exercise can be swapped for 75 mins of vigorous exercise).
6. Drinking enough water – 1.5-2 litres every day, and more if you partake in high intensity exercise, are in hot weather or have a very physically demanding job.
7. Quitting smoking – smoking increases stress levels, speak with your GP for support.
8. Limiting caffeine to no more than 400mg daily – this equates to approximately 4 cups of tea or coffee each day, but less if you are buying coffee from a shop which can have up to 200mg caffeine per drink.

9. Not obsessing over your weight – avoid jumping on the scales every 5 minutes. If you feel better keeping track of your weight, only weigh yourself once or twice a week, any more than that will just cause undue stress as we all fluctuate on a daily basis. Ensuring you're eating a balanced diet rich in fruit and veg, wholegrains and lean protein, your weight is one element of your life that can be stress free.
10. Balancing your work and home life – this has been given a whole new meaning in 2020. It can often be difficult to separate the two now as many of us are working from home. Keep your work-space away from your living space if possible, as tidy it away come the end of the day.

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