

WellCheck



M&E BUILDING
SERVICES LTD

Taking Action for Mental Wellbeing



*Small steps. Real impact.
For you, your team, our industry.*

Why This Matters in Our Industry

MENTAL HEALTH ISN'T A WEAKNESS – it's the foundation of resilience on site and in the office. In M&E and construction, the pressures are real: tight deadlines, unpredictable sites, long hours, physical demands, and the constant need to deliver for clients and subcontractors.

The numbers don't lie

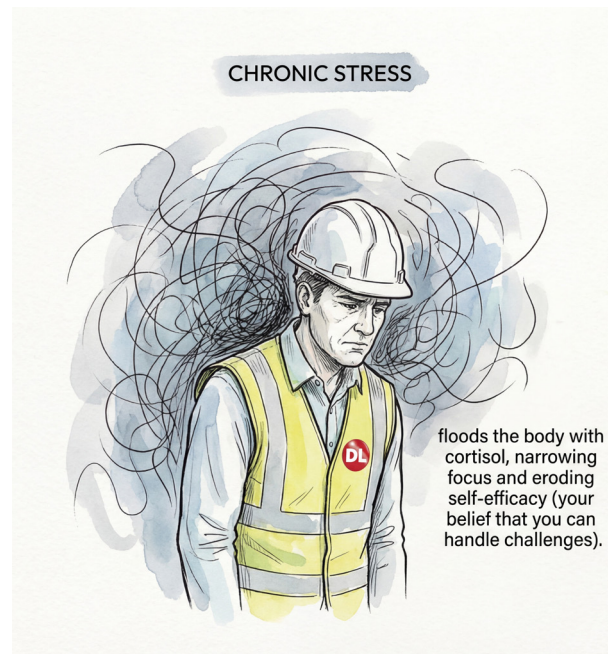
- ☹ Construction workers are 3–4 times more likely to die by suicide than the national average – two every single day in the UK.¹
- ☹ 94% of built-environment workers experienced stress in the past year; 83% anxiety; 60% depression. 26–28% have had suicidal thoughts.²
- ☹ 91% of construction workers have felt overwhelmed by mental health struggles.³

Psychology fact

Chronic stress floods the body with cortisol, narrowing focus and eroding self-efficacy (your belief that you can handle challenges). But neuroplasticity means your brain can rewire with consistent small actions – that's where real change starts.

We already have strength

Our 6 trained Mental Health First Aiders are here to listen – no judgement, just support.



Small, consistent actions lower cortisol and restore a sense of control.

¹ <https://www.considerateconstructors.com/blog/world-suicide-prevention-day-2025/>
² <https://www.ciob.org/blog/construction%E2%80%99s-mental-health-crisis-continues-despite-increased-support>
³ <https://www.considerateconstructors.com/blog/world-suicide-prevention-day-2025/>

The Psychology of Action

Mental health exists on a continuum. Everyone moves up and down it. The good news? Evidence-based psychology shows you control more than you think.

Key principles

- ❖ Self-efficacy (Ref. Alberto Bandura): Believing you can succeed through small wins builds confidence and buffers stress.⁴
- ❖ Self-determination theory: Autonomy (your choices), competence (mastery), and relatedness (connection) are the fuel for wellbeing.
- ❖ Cognitive Behavioural principles: Thoughts influence feelings and actions – and you can interrupt unhelpful cycles.

Action isn't about perfection. It's about one step that creates momentum. Research shows even moderate changes in movement, connection, diet or thought patterns deliver measurable reductions in depression/anxiety symptoms (medium effect sizes across large meta-analyses).^{5, 6}

Quick wins can be used to start building the belief that “I can influence how I feel and perform,” which buffers against helplessness, stress, and the “all-or-nothing” mindset common in high-pressure office and M&E site work.

The Four Actions

You don't need to do everything at once. The following four practical actions – grounded in psychology and real workplace evidence – give you simple, proven ways to build resilience, regain control, and protect your mental edge. Start with whichever feels most relevant right now. Small, consistent steps create real momentum.

Self-efficacy is your belief that you can handle challenges.

Actions build self-efficacy that improves performance, reduces burnout, and supports behaviour change.

4 Bandura, A. (1997). Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control. New York: W. H. Freeman.
5 <https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/57/18/1203>
6 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6455094/>

ACTION 1.

Move Your Body

– Build Momentum, Mastery & Control

Psychology deep dive

Physical activity triggers neuroplasticity and releases BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor), literally helping your brain grow new connections that buffer stress and lift mood. It also builds self-efficacy – your belief that you can influence outcomes – which is a powerful antidote to the helplessness many feel on sites/in office when deadlines or workload spiral.⁷

Small, consistent wins here create a ripple: better energy → clearer thinking → confidence that carries into work.

Evidence & stats

Exercise reduces depression symptoms with moderate-to-large effect sizes (comparable to therapy in many cases). People



who exercise report 40% fewer poor mental-health days per month; 3–5 sessions of 45 minutes per week deliver optimal benefits.^{8,9}

Even half the recommended dose (about 2.5 hours of brisk walking per week) cuts depression risk by 18–25%. Resistance training and moderate aerobic work are especially effective for anxiety and stress too.

In our M&E world

Site life is already physical, but deliberate movement outside the job gives you back control – especially when weight, fatigue, or “can’t be bothered” feelings creep in. It counters the cortisol spikes from long hours and unpredictable schedules.

“People who exercise report 40% fewer poor mental-health days per month

→ **Get moving. Reclaim control.**

⁷ <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/12/exercise>

⁸ <https://www.uclahealth.org/news/article/the-link-between-exercise-and-mental-health>

⁹ <https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/57/18/1203>



Check your current habits
– tick what you already do, circle what you'll add:

WellCheck Actions

- ❑ **Psychological prep to get started:** Notice the barrier thought (“I’m too tired / no time”) and reframe it once: “One 10-minute walk today builds momentum and proves I can choose my energy.” Do this mental step before lacing up – it beats the all-or-nothing trap.
- ❑ **Start tiny:** 10-minute brisk walk on site (lunch break or after shift) or office break lap. Build to 3 sessions/week.
- ❑ **Add a competence target for achievement:** Track “3 walks this week” or try Padel with a colleague – the social + movement combo amplifies the self-efficacy boost.
- ❑ **Link to weight & confidence:** Movement is the fastest way to regain a sense of control over weight/energy. Set one micro-goal (e.g., add protein to lunch 4 days this week + 2 walks). Small losses (or even stable weight with better muscle) improve sleep quality and mood – creating a positive loop. No crash diets; just consistent action that proves “I can influence this.”
- ❑ **Use spare time:** Use site downtime or opportunities in travel time for body-weight moves (squats, stretches).



One Small Win This Week:

“I’ll do one
10-minute walk
and note how
my head feels
afterwards.”

Building resilience, one step at a time.

ACTION 2.

Connect

– You're Not Alone on Site or in the Office

Psychology deep dive

Humans are wired for relatedness (Self-Determination Theory). Strong social ties lower inflammation, buffer against cortisol (which can create weight gain), and halve the risk of early death. Loneliness triggers the same stress response as physical pain and doubles depression risk. A single genuine check-in can interrupt isolation cycles that are common in our shift-based, subcontractor-heavy environment.

Evidence & stats

Loneliness carries a health risk equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.¹⁰ People with strong connections report

higher resilience and fewer sick days. In high-pressure industries, even brief supportive conversations measurably reduce perceived stress.¹¹

In our M&E world

Site teams and subs can feel invisible between jobs; office staff drown in emails. The “just get on with it” culture hides strain – but one conversation normalises it and leverages our existing Mental Health First Aiders.

In high-pressure environments like M&E and construction, relatedness isn't just a nice-to-have – it's a core resilience factor according to Self-Determination Theory.



Research shows that satisfying our need for genuine connection and belonging reduces perceived stress, buffers against isolation, and strengthens self-efficacy through shared experiences. On sites where subcontractors move between projects and office teams juggle constant coordination, even a simple, authentic check-in can interrupt isolation cycles, improve mood and focus, and foster a team culture where people look out for one another.¹²

¹⁰ <https://www.who.int/news/item/30-06-2025-social-connection-linked-to-improved-health-and-reduced-risk-of-early-death>

¹¹ <https://www.brown.com/us/insight/social-connection-in-the-workplace/>

¹² Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78.

WellCheck Actions

- ❑ **One daily genuine connection:** Ask a colleague or sub “How’s your week really going?” (not just work talk). Listen without fixing.
- ❑ **Team micro-ritual:** 5-minute site huddle or office coffee chat once a week focused on non-work wins (“What went well outside the job?”).
- ❑ **Reach out proactively:** Text or call someone you haven’t spoken to in weeks – especially a sub who might be between sites.
- ❑ **Use your MHFA network:** If you’re struggling, know our trained First Aiders are ready – it’s a built-in connection point.
- ❑ **Reach out across roles:** Send a quick voice note or photo from site to an office colleague (or vice versa) sharing one positive moment from your day – it builds cross-team relatedness in minutes.

Take five. Have a brew.
Check your WellCheck.



One Small Win This Week:

“I’ll have one real conversation and notice how it shifts my mood.”

ACTION 3.

Reframe Your Thoughts

– Interrupt the Spiral with CBT Principles

Psychology deep dive

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) shows thoughts are not facts – they're habits we can interrupt. Cognitive restructuring (identifying “thinking traps” like catastrophising or all-or-nothing) plus behavioural experiments build emotional regulation and restore prefrontal cortex control that stress impairs.

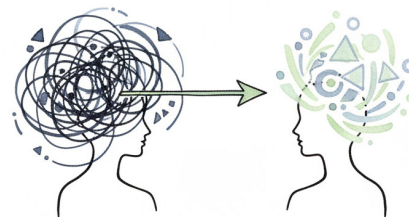
Evidence & stats

Research on CBT techniques shows large improvements in anxiety (effect size $g = 0.88$ – 1.20 in key studies), meaning real, noticeable shifts in how people feel and function – not just minor changes.^{13, 14, 15}

In our M&E world

Under deadline or workload pressure, the mind defaults to “This delay will ruin the whole project” or “I’m failing.” Reframing gives you agency back.

13 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5032489/>
 14 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0272735825000194>
 15 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3584580/>



Under the relentless pace of deadlines, workload, and client demands, unhelpful thinking patterns like catastrophising can quickly narrow our focus and drain energy. CBT-based techniques work by gently interrupting these automatic loops, restoring prefrontal cortex function and reactivating the brain's ability to see options rather than threats.

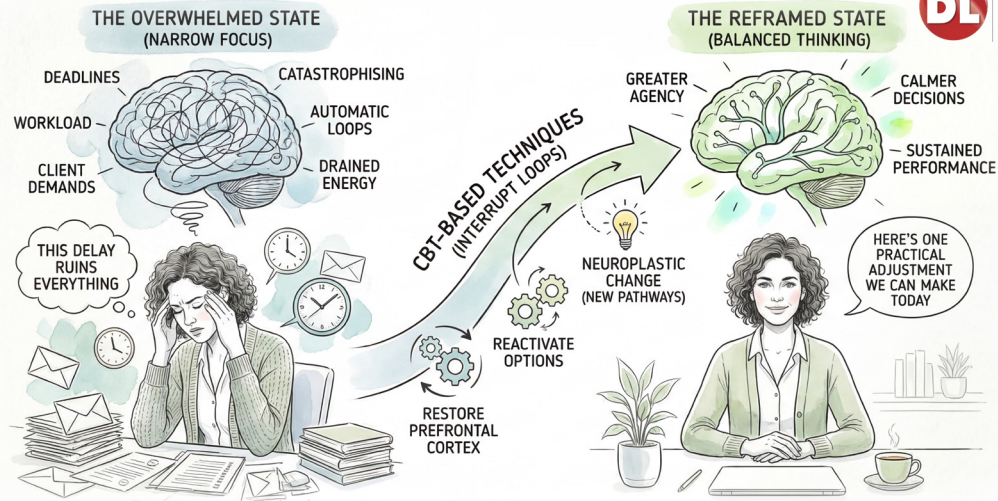
Over time, this builds neuroplastic change – new neural pathways that make balanced thinking feel more natural. In our industry, where one reframed thought can turn “this delay ruins everything” into “here’s one practical adjustment we can make today,” the result is greater agency, calmer decisions, and sustained performance.



One Small Win This Week:

“I’ll catch one unhelpful thought and reframe it on the spot.”

Build
resilience
through
reframed
thinking



WellCheck Actions

- ❑ **Box breathing** (4 sec in – hold 4 – out 4 – hold 4) during tense moments – instantly calms the nervous system.
- ❑ **Catch & challenge (3-step CBT tool):** 1) Name the thought ("This schedule is impossible"). 2) Evidence for/against. 3) Balanced version ("It's tight, but we've handled worse – here's one adjustment").
- ❑ **"Yet" mindset shift:** Change "I can't handle this" to "I haven't nailed this yet."
- ❑ **Behavioural experiment:** Test the feared thought once (e.g., flag a concern early instead of bottling it) and log the real outcome.
- ❑ **Quick daily win log:** At the end of your shift or workday, note one situation you handled well (even if small) and write the balanced thought that helped – this reinforces mastery experiences and strengthens self-efficacy.
- ❑ **"Evidence walk":** When a negative thought hits, pause for 60 seconds and list two pieces of real evidence against it – a fast, portable way to interrupt spirals during site walks or office moments.

Simple daily techniques lower perceived workplace pressure and improve performance

ACTION 4.

Prioritise Rest & Recover

– Protect Your Edge (with Sleep & Weight Links)

Psychology deep dive

Sleep restores the prefrontal cortex (decision-making + emotion control). Consistent schedules stabilise your circadian rhythm, which directly influences mood, energy, and resilience. Poor sleep and weight are bidirectional: sleep disruption alters hunger hormones (ghrelin up, leptin down) → easier weight gain; excess weight can worsen sleep (e.g., breathing issues). Improving either creates a powerful self-efficacy loop.^{16, 17}

Evidence & stats

Poor sleep hygiene is strongly linked to higher depression rates. Consistent bed/wake times (even most weekends) significantly improve sleep quality and mental health. Weight management through movement + habits improves sleep, closing the loop.¹⁸

In our M&E world

Early starts, late emails, and shift patterns erode recovery fast. Protecting rest isn't soft – it's what keeps you sharp on site.

Habits That Protect (or Drain) Your Edge

Many of us use alcohol, vaping, or frequent sugary/processed snacks to unwind or boost energy. While they might feel helpful short-term, evidence shows they can work against mental wellbeing and recovery:¹⁹

- ❖ Alcohol often fragments sleep, increases next-day anxiety/low mood, and raises overall strain in high-pressure roles.²⁰
- ❖ Vaping/nicotine can heighten anxiety and depression symptoms over time, despite initial “calm” feelings.²¹
- ❖ Frequent ultra-processed or high-sugar snacks are linked to higher depression risk and energy crashes via inflammation and blood sugar swings.²²

16 <https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/sleep-diabetes-and-obesity>
 17 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0939475325001681>
 18 <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/why-your-sleep-and-wake-cycles-affect-your-mood-2020051319792>
 19 https://truthinitiative.org/sites/default/files/media/files/2021/10/Mental%20Health%20and%20Nicotine%20Report_10.7.2021.pdf
 20 <https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/18/4/585>
 21 <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2756260>
 22 <https://www.news-medical.net/health/The-Science-of-Ultra-Processed-Foods-and-Mental-Health.aspx>

WellCheck Actions

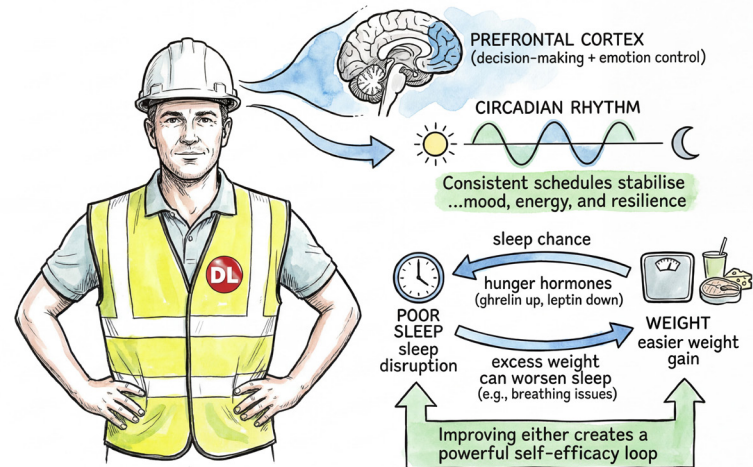
- ❑ **Consistent sleep schedule:** Choose a realistic bedtime and wake time (e.g., 10 pm–6 am) and stick to it ± 30 minutes every day – including most weekends. This is the single most powerful free lever for circadian health.
- ❑ **Wind-down ritual:** No work phone/email after 8 pm (auto-reply: “I’ll reply tomorrow”). Dim lights, no screens 30–60 min before bed to quieten mind for sleep.
- ❑ **Weight-sleep link & action:** If weight/energy feels off, pair one movement win (from Action 1) with better sleep – better sleep reduces cravings and supports sustainable weight control. Track one small nutrition choice (e.g., balanced evening meal, no heavy food late) alongside the sleep schedule. Even modest improvements here boost confidence and energy fast.
- ❑ **Bedroom environment:** Cool, dark, quiet. If noise is an issue on site stays, use earplugs or white noise.
- ❑ **Daytime recovery:** One 10-minute stretch or quiet moment during the shift – prevents burnout accumulation.



One Small Win This Week:

“I’ll set a fixed wake time and protect my evening cutoff minus an evening habit.”

- ❑ **Track one evening:** Notice if alcohol, vaping, or late snacks affect your sleep quality or morning mood.
- ❑ **Small step option:** Replace one instance this week (e.g., one fewer drink, swap a sugary snack for protein + veg, or delay vaping by 30 minutes) and note any difference in energy or rest.
- ❑ **Link to bigger wins:** Better habits here amplify your movement goals and sleep consistency, giving a stronger sense of control and achievement.



Your WellCheck Summary + Resources

AVAILABLE SUPPORT

DL M&E has a number of trained Mental Health First Aiders available for support.

Overall WellCheck Score

Count how many of the 24 WellCheck actions you completed this week (tick them off as you go).

Your score this week: ____ / 24

What your score means

(Choose the band that matches your total)

- 0–5:** Well done for starting – the first steps are always the hardest. You've already begun building momentum. Keep going with the ones that feel easiest, and try adding just one more when you're ready.
- 6–11:** You're making solid progress and should already be noticing small improvements in energy, mood or control. Link a couple of actions together (e.g. a walk + a quick check-in) to amplify the benefit.
- 12–17:** Great work – you're building real self-efficacy and starting to feel more in control. These habits are becoming part of your routine. Focus on consistency rather than adding more.
- 18–23:** Excellent momentum! You're prioritising your well-being and will be experiencing clearer thinking and stronger resilience. Keep the actions that work best for you as daily habits.
- 24:** Outstanding – you're consistently looking after your mental edge. You now have a strong foundation of self-efficacy to handle challenges at work and home. Consider sharing one or two actions that worked well for you with a colleague.

