Stress Management: Five Ways to Support Your Brain

Five practical, flexible approaches for difficult or demanding days

Stress is a response to demands or perceived threats. It can affect attention, memory, sleep, emotions and the body. You do not need to eliminate every stressor to support yourself.

These five approaches are options, not rules. Choose what is safe, accessible and helpful for you. Rest, support and adjustments matter as much as individual coping strategies.

Five ways to support your brain

1 PAUSE
Notice your stress

2 REGULATE
Settle your senses

3 SIMPLIFY
Reduce demands

4 CONNECT
Ask for support

5 RECOVER
Protect rest

Use the following worksheets to identify what your brain needs and design a small, realistic support plan.

Stress can have real external causes. If your workload, safety or environment is the problem, practical changes and appropriate support may be needed.

Worksheet 1 | Pause & Notice

Way 1: Pause. Stress can narrow attention. A brief check-in may help you identify what is happening before deciding what to do next.

Notice your body, thoughts and surroundings without judging your response. A pause can be as simple as putting both feet on the floor or looking around the room.

What is putting pressure on me right now?

What am I noticing in my body, mood or concentration?

What is one thing I need in this moment?

Gentle reminder: noticing is enough. You do not have to make yourself calm immediately.

Worksheet 2 | Regulate & Recover

Way 2: Regulate. Try a comfortable sensory or grounding action, such as relaxing your shoulders, feeling your feet on the floor or noticing five things around you. Breathing exercises are optional.

Way 5: Recover. Your brain also needs opportunities for sleep, breaks and reduced demands. Rest is not something you must earn.

A grounding or sensory strategy that suits me

What helps me recover after a demanding day?

A realistic opportunity for rest or a short break

If a technique increases discomfort, stop and choose another. Recovery may require help with responsibilities.

Worksheet 3 | Simplify & Connect

Way 3: Simplify. Working memory can feel overloaded under stress. Try writing down tasks, choosing one next action, reducing interruptions or requesting clear instructions.

Way 4: Connect. Support might mean asking someone to listen, sharing a task, requesting an adjustment or seeking professional help.

What can be postponed, shared, shortened or removed?

My one manageable next step

Who could help, and what exactly could I ask?

Example: “I am overloaded today. Could we agree which task needs doing first?”

Worksheet 4 | My Brain Support Plan

Pick strategies that fit your energy, access needs and circumstances. Small adjustments are often more sustainable than a long list of new habits.

My early signs of stress or overload

The first supportive step I will try

A demand or barrier I can change or ask to change

Who or what can support me?

How will I review what helped?

When to seek more support

If stress is persistent, worsening or affecting everyday functioning, speak with a GP or qualified professional. If you are in immediate danger, seek emergency help.