

Stress

“Stress will move you: it will push you either forward or backward, but you choose which direction.” —Chelsea Eriean

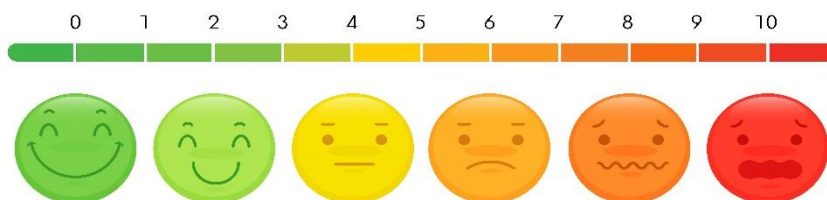


Warm up

- What are some things that stress you out?
- Do you think the stress levels at your job or school are particularly high?
- Do you know anyone with a job that you would find very stressful? How do they deal with it?
- Do you have any good strategies for dealing with stress?
- Do you feel like people are more stressed out now than they were 10 years ago? Why or why not?
- Is there a place you go when you need some peace and quiet?



1. With a partner, rate the life experiences based on how stressful you think they are. Feel free to discuss any personal experiences you have with these in more detail.



- Going to the dentist
- Moving house
- Organising a party or dinner at your house
- Going to a job interview for your dream job
- Ending a long-term relationship
- Deciding on a large purchase such as a house or car
- Taking a long international flight
- Christmas with your family
- Going through a two week period at work or school when you have to work a lot more than usual



2. Read the article and answer the questions on the next page. Try to figure out what the underlined phrases mean based on their context.

There's no doubt about it, modern life can be a drag sometimes. Bills to pay, deadlines to meet, and an endless list of meetings, most of which probably could have been an email. However, it's vital in the modern world to take a step back, stop and smell the roses, and manage your stress effectively. In this article we'll take a look at some of the biggest stressors in the lives of young professionals, and give some constructive tips on how to deal with them.

Not every workplace has a specific "crunch time", but it's no coincidence that industries with crunch time have much higher levels of burnout. Some workplaces even have what is being referred to as "crunch culture", that being a culture which encourages long hours and sometimes absurd amounts of work leading up to the deadline for a big project. Crunch culture is particularly prominent in entertainment industries such as video game development, and it's not unheard of for some video game developers to work 80 or even 100 hour weeks in the lead-up to a big release. These kinds of hours often lead to burnt out employees, which leads to even more stress, as burnt out staff have to take time off, leaving the rest of the already exhausted workforce to pick up the slack. If you feel like your work has an unhealthy "crunch culture", the two most important things are to set clear boundaries (i.e. I won't even be looking at my emails outside of work hours) and to clearly communicate with your boss that you feel like it is literally not possible to continue working under this much stress.

Speaking of colleagues taking time off, this often causes a lot more stress than you might expect. If you work closely with and rely on your colleagues, you may have mixed feelings when they take time off work right when you need them the most. Of course you're delighted for Carol from accounting when she tells you she's spending the next two weeks on a beach in the Bahamas... but does that mean you're going to have to do the invoices and the tax returns?? You're already flat out, and now this?! In this situation preparation is key. Make sure you know exactly what tasks you'll be taking over, and how to do them. The person who is on leave needs to write clear notes on all their tasks and responsibilities. That way you won't be pulling your hair out and trying to figure out exactly what you need to do.

For workers who have children, balancing work and family can feel like an impossible task sometimes. Football games, dentist appointments, and helping with projects from school are just a few tasks that can fill up your already busy schedule. In these situations it is vital to manage your stress levels, because a worn out parent is far more likely to snap at either their spouse or their child, creating even more stress. The first step to avoiding this is to make sure the parental responsibilities are shared evenly, that way you won't end up resenting your spouse for taking a smaller portion of the work. It's also very important to keep in mind that these "tasks" are not just responsibilities that must be taken care of. It's very easy to just see them as another on a long list of things to do, but these times are actually valuable time to bond with your children, and although they may seem to come at the least convenient times, you should try to find the moments of joy in them, and they may actually come as a welcome relief to the grind of your work day.

- a) What advice does the article have for people who are overworked? Do you think it is good advice?
- b) According to the article, why might someone not be happy about a colleague going on vacation?
- c) What advice does the article have for working parents? Do you think it is good or realistic advice?
- d) For each of the three subjects discussed here, what advice would you give?



3. Match the underlined phases in the article to their definition below.

- a) To be extremely busy.
- b) Something that is boring and exhausting.
- c) A feeling of relaxation after stress or anxiety has been removed.
- d) To be very tired, usually because of a long period of work.
- e) To be so exhausted that you are unable to continue working.
- f) Something that is very unlikely but happens anyway.
- g) Something that we mean seriously, exactly as we say it.
- h) A period during which you must work extra hard.
- i) To take a break and appreciate the beauty in life.
- j) To yell at someone unexpectedly, usually for a small thing.
- k) To do the work or tasks that have been left undone for some reason.



4. Ask and answer the following questions with a partner.

- a) When was the last time you felt really worn out? What caused it?
- b) Do you feel like your job or school has crunch time? When is it, and how do you deal with it?
- c) When you are stressed, do you ever snap at people? Do you know anyone who does?
- d) Have you ever experienced a coincidence, such as having the same birthday as someone else?
- e) Do you think you take enough time to stop and smell the roses, or do you feel like you need to do that more often?
- f) Have you ever known anyone who was completely burnt out at work or school? What caused it?



5. Listen to the audio and answer the questions.

- a) How many hours a week is Mark working at the moment?
- b) What does Mark do?
- c) Why doesn't Mark believe that Jenny is really sick?
- d) Why does Mark think telling his boss that he won't work more than 50 hours is a bad idea?
- e) What did Mark have a fight with his partner about?
- f) How does Mark like to relax?
- g) Why is Lucy, Mark's wife, irritable at the moment, and how does that add to Mark's stress levels?
- h) What suggestion does Claire make as a way to unwind, and how does Mark react to it?



6. Read the email and answer the questions on the next page.

Staff need to blow off some steam!

Hi guys,

I don't know if you've noticed this, but all 3 teams are super worn out at the moment. I mean we are always exhausted after delivering a big project like we did last week, but this time it seems like more than just tired, I think the long hours and the fact that the client was constantly changing their mind about what they actually wanted has taken some of our employees dangerously close to burn out. I've noticed staff who are usually good friends have started snapping at each other, I've heard 3 staff members this week alone crying in the bathrooms, and yesterday I watched Mark from accounting type for literally 15 minutes on a computer that wasn't turned on... So, I think we might have pushed them a bit too hard.

Now I think as a way to help them unwind, but also as a valuable opportunity for staff members to bond together, we should organise a company weekend at a resort in Turkey, Antalya. The resort I've chosen has an enormous amount of group activities available, and you can also find some great activities in the surrounding area. I'd like each of you to find some activities you think would be suitable and then decide on 3 of them together. Please keep in mind that these activities are not just for unwinding, but I also really want to encourage members from different teams to bond with each other. I've noticed the three teams have started to be a bit too isolated from each other lately, and I'd like to remind them that ultimately we are all on the same side!

Regards, Richard Dreyfuss

- a) What do you think “blow off some steam” means in the subject of the email?
- b) Why are the employees so tired?
- c) What 3 signs does Richard mention that show the company is overworked?
- d) What does Richard want to do to help the company relax? Do you think it’s a good or bad idea?
- e) What two things does Richard want to achieve by having the staff do group activities?



7. Student A and Student B each have different sets of three activities. Read your own activities, explain them and their benefits to your partner, and then together choose three out of all six to present to Richard Dreyfuss.

Student A

Pottery Classes

Discover your inner artist and shape your imagination into beautiful works of art! Join our pottery classes for a hands-on experience that’s a great way to blow off some steam! Whether you’re a beginner or a seasoned pro, our friendly instructors will guide you every step of the way.

Sign up today and start crafting your masterpiece!



Massage and Spa Day

Spoil yourself with the ultimate relaxation experience with our luxurious massage and spa packages. From soothing massages to refreshing saunas, treat yourself to a day of pure bliss. Escape the stress of everyday life and leave feeling renewed and ready to take on the world.

Book your perfect spa day today!



Paintball

Ready for an adrenaline-packed adventure? Grab your gear, grab your friends, and dive into the ultimate paintball experience! Paintball is a great way to develop a group of people into a strategic unit that can work smoothly together!

Book your game today, you won’t regret it!



Student B

Yoga Classes

Stretch, strengthen, and center your mind with our rejuvenating yoga classes. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced yogi, our welcoming instructors will guide you through every pose with ease. Come for the relaxation, stay for the transformation.

Join us today for a healthier, more balanced you!



Horse Riding Lessons

Ready to ride? Our expert instructors offer personalized horse-riding lessons for all skill levels. Whether you want to learn advanced riding, or just take a nice trot through the countryside, we can accommodate. Horses often have a calming, therapeutic effect on people, so these courses with horses are perfect for those who need to unwind from the modern grind!

Start your journey today—unforgettable moments await!



Escape Room

Ready for a challenge? Gather your team and dive into an immersive adventure filled with puzzles, clues, and adrenaline! Whether you're solving a crime or escaping a haunted mansion, every second counts. Can you escape before time runs out?

Book your escape experience today and test your wits!

The Clock is Ticking. Are You Ready?



8. Now present the 3 activities you have chosen and your reasons for choosing them to your class.