

# Five Steps for Managing Stress

A practical guide for coping with everyday pressure and adversity.

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## What is stress?

Stress is a natural response to pressure, uncertainty or difficult events. Short-term stress may help a person respond to a challenge. Prolonged or overwhelming stress can affect mood, sleep, concentration, relationships and physical health.

## Five practical steps

1. Slow your breathing. Breathe in gently, pause briefly and breathe out slowly. Repeat without forcing the breath.
2. Ground yourself. Notice five things you see, four you feel, three you hear, two you smell and one you taste.
3. Break the problem into smaller steps. Choose one realistic action you can complete today.
4. Return to healthy routines. Protect sleep, meals, movement, rest and connection with supportive people.
5. Ask for support. Speak with a trusted person or qualified professional when stress becomes difficult to manage alone.

## My stress plan

What is creating pressure today?

What is within my control?

What is outside my control?

Who can support me?

What is one small action I can take today?



**Seek help when stress is severe, lasts a long time, disrupts daily life, leads to harmful coping, or includes thoughts of self-harm or suicide.**

Source: World Health Organization, Doing What Matters in Times of Stress. Review date: 10 June 2026.