

Physical activity while at work

Depending on your work environment you could be working 8 hours or more, during this time your energy levels will fluctuate. Many people working in health and social care are not taking their breaks, this can lead to unsafe practice. It is important that you take time away from work activities to re-energise even for a few minutes at a time.

Short breaks of time away from your work station or work environment regularly during a shift will help you to refocus and increase work productivity; it will help you to concentrate and be fully engaged in your practice.

If you are sitting or standing in one place for a long time:

- Moving to get a drink of water can help you to refocus
- Stretching can release tension by helping the blood to flow round the body and also relaxing the muscles

Stretching exercises

Here's a few basic stretching exercises that you can do at work to help relieve tension in muscles and increase your energy levels



Tilt head from front to back and side to side. Avoid rotating head backwards – this will apply pressure to the top of spine



Gently reach down your side, palm flat and shoulders square



Hold your hands straight above your head, pull gently from side to side, keeping shoulders square



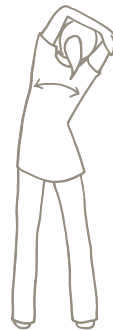
Place palm flat on opposite side of back, place hand on elbow and apply gentle pressure



Face wall and support self with hand. Bring foot up behind and hold. With knees together, bend supporting leg and push hips forward



Keep tension in thighs, feet forward, at least shoulder width apart and lean from side to side, weight in heels



Keep shoulders square, place hands behind head, placing elbows in hands, hips square and lean from side to side

Wellbeing & resilience in short:

- Take regular breaks
- Ensure you have the right amount of sleep for you
- Eat foods that will give you long lasting energy
- Drink caffeine free drinks throughout the day to keep hydrated
- When things are difficult in your workplace try to find a quiet space and take 3 minutes do a breathing exercise
- Take 5 minutes to do stretching exercises
- Keep connected to others, friends, colleagues
- Have regular clinical supervision
- Speak with your manager if things are not going well
- Look for Mindfulness resources online

Active Listening for Wellbeing CIC has been developed based on lived experience of the military and health & social care practice.

We offer workshops on wellbeing and resilience and

- Support with Transitions (from student to qualified practitioner, from military life to civilian life)
- Personal Activity Plans
- Reflective Practice Groups
- Nutritional Guidance
- Clinical Supervision
- Counselling
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Assertiveness Training

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Wellbeing & Resilience for Health and Social Care Workers

Tips and advice for staying fit and motivated at work



Wellbeing & Resilience

Working in health and social care can be very rewarding; however it is recognised that it can lead to compassion fatigue, also known as secondary stress and burnout. The pressures placed on those who care for others in need can affect relationships with colleagues, service users and carers.

People experiencing compassion fatigue may feel tired, irritable and have changes to their sleeping pattern. This may lead to developing potentially harmful coping strategies, for example increased alcohol intake or substance abuse. It can also contribute to poor or inadequate care of service users and ill health of self and or colleagues. In order to be able to carry out your role effectively and to the best of your ability it is important to think about how you care for yourself and develop resilience.

Resilience is the ability to positively adjust to adversity and challenging situations, this is important for health and social care workers. Achieving a work-life balance building on personal strength, nurturing professional relationships, developing emotional insight and becoming more reflective can help towards becoming resilient.

This leaflet offers some information and suggestions for your wellbeing

Working in health and social care can require you to be on high alert throughout your working day with a consequence of increased levels of cortisol. Cortisol is a hormone that is released in response to stress, 'fight or flight'; a certain amount of stress is needed, too much can have a negative effect and may result in this →

There are things that you can do to help to build your resilience levels whilst at work these include:

- Eating healthily
- Staying hydrated by drinking water
- Contact with others
- Regular physical activity



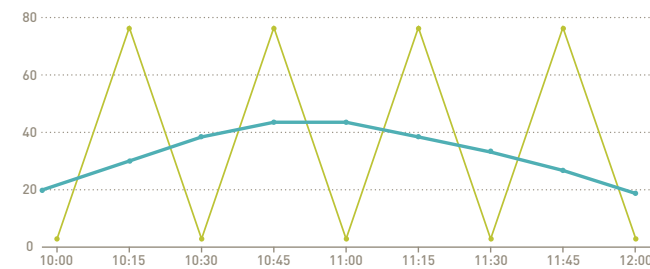
When to eat while at work

Eating small amounts regularly will reduce fatigue and keep energy levels balanced.

Ensure you have had breakfast, or a meal before getting to work. It's important to have regular, small, healthy snacks during your shift. Lunch should be your biggest meal and dinner the smallest. Only allow gaps of two to three hours between eating times to help keep energy levels balanced and prevent big spikes and crashes – as shown in the diagram below.



Comparing energy levels over a two hour period:



—◆— = Energy levels spiking and crashing due to either high amounts of sugar, caffeine or both.

—●— = Balanced energy levels provided by nutritious foods, leading to a longer lasting and slower release of energy.

What to drink while at work

- Try to limit your caffeine intake
- Fruit teas can be a good alternative to tea, coffee and sugary soft drinks
- Try to drink 2 litres of water a day – taking small sips throughout the day



Contact with others

- Contact with others is one of the key elements to increase wellbeing and resilience at work
- Talk to people you work with about how you are feeling at work (offload)
- Make use of regular clinical supervision

