

# Combat stress and look after your heart

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## Lifestyle and exercise

UK cardiac nurse Regina Giblin recommends exercising at least three times a week, and “get out into the fresh air if you can, as this will release endorphins or ‘happy hormones’ to make you feel better and less stressed”.

Eating healthy foods will boost your immune system and protect your body from inflammation. She suggests a Mediterranean diet of lots of fish and vegetables, and red meat only twice a week; to drink in moderation; and stick to a healthy BMI.

## Share the chores

Future of work's Christine Armstrong recommends sharing jobs at home more evenly, thinking about how often they are done and when.

## Create boundaries at work

“Practice, demonstrate and talk about boundaries with your team. For example, no emails after 8pm or at weekends,” Armstrong says. “You will suffer less stress if you work it out as a team.”

## Write an action plan

“People are still feeling the impact of the pandemic and trying to adjust, and it can be very stressful,” says Dr Becky Spelman, psychologist and clinical director of the Private Therapy Clinic in the UK.

“The best thing to do is to try to break things down and to plan and write down the actions you're going to take in relation to anything that is causing you stress.”

## Be good, but not too good, at multitasking

If you can exercise in your work breaks, or even work while you're on a treadmill, that's great.

“But generally, we over-estimate our ability to switch between tasks,” Armstrong says. “If we're always doing fragmented tasks, then there's no sense of achievement, and it drains our energy.

“We need to learn to focus on one thing when it comes to work and our home life, and then we're able to get it done and strike it off our list.”

## Keep an eye on your blood pressure

“Get your blood pressure checked so you know if it is under control. A healthy blood pressure is less than 140/90,” Giblin says.

## De-stress

“Take managing stress levels seriously. Try some tools to help with your stress, such as mindfulness or meditation or yoga, and build yourself a support system of people you can talk to,” Giblin says.