

# How to look after your mental health at work

The only thing we spend more time doing than work is sleep. In fact, more than 81,000 hours of our lives are spent working.

With that in mind, it's really important we equip ourselves with techniques to manage our mental health whilst we're at work. Here are just four ways you can look after your mental health in work:

1

**Change something:** It can feel hard to ask for help - we often find it uncomfortable, overwhelming or feel that we are a failure for doing so. However, unless you put change in, nothing will change for you. Speaking to your line manager or superior about how you're feeling can be hugely beneficial.

2

**Learn to value yourself:** Many people feel that they 'owe' their employer and so prioritise work over all their other needs. It's important to understand that your job has a reason and meaning, but to not make it the only reason and meaning of your life.

3

**Prioritise your mental wellness outside of work:** What's important is getting a good balance of activities in your life. These can be split into three categories:

- 1) Routine
- 2) Necessary
- 3) Pleasurable

Colour-code the categories and diarise the activities in your day using the colours. That way you'll see whether you have a balance between the three categories, or if one is outweighing the others.

4

**Equip yourself with breathing and relaxation techniques:** When we feel stressed, anxious or notice the onset of a panic attack, one of the most important things we can do is slow down our heart rate. Take a look at some simple breathing and relaxation techniques online or google diaphragmatic breathing - in through the nose out through the mouth. Breathing techniques are relatively inconspicuous, so no one will clock that you're doing them.

Try this today.  
Diarise 20 mins outside into your work calendar.

Spending time outside has been proven to reduce levels of anxiety and stress. In fact, fresh air can help improve your mood. It's easy for the intention of going outside to get lost in a busy day. So, put it in your diary and invite a colleague to encourage you to get up and get out. If you're unable to go outside, schedule in 20 mins to do breathing exercises, listen to soothing music or practice grounding techniques.

