

Top tips for stress prevention

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Stress is part of everyday life whether it's studying for exams, learning new techniques in clinics or just balancing your social and work life, and family. Stress can drive us, motivate us and give us the energy to fit it all in, but too much of it could cause us harm.¹

Dentistry is widely considered to be a stressful profession. You work in the confinement of a small clinic, meeting the health needs of anxious patients with high expectations, all alongside increasing regulation. But it's also a highly rewarding, stimulating and flexible profession, so it's good to get your stress prevention in place while you're young.²

Follow these simple top tips to manage stress this winter:

1. **Have some 'down time' away from dentistry:** read a book, go for a run, watch a film, find a new hobby, take a dog for a walk, have a relaxing bath, listen to music or get more sleep - just find time to take a break.^{3,4}
2. **Get outdoors:** whatever the weather, being in nature has been shown to reduce levels of anxiety, stress, and depression.⁴
3. **Exercise:** whether it's walking instead of getting the bus or doing a high intensity fitness session, exercise produces endorphins, feel good hormones, which can calm anxiety and lift your mood. And with free local runs, outdoor gyms and many more sessions in your city, exercise is accessible to us all.^{5,3,4}
4. **Try something new and relaxing:** yoga, tai chi, the Alexander Technique, meditation or mindfulness, there are tonnes of health and fitness apps to choose from so you don't have to go to an expensive class.^{4,3,6}
5. **Be more proactive:** some people try more structured approaches for stress relief, such as computer or internet based cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) or online counselling. The NHS provide a service that is free and confidential.^{3,7}

Mental health problems affect one in four people in the UK and can present themselves from a young age.⁸ There are a number of studies about the pressure dental students are under; one recently noted the high occurrence of depression, anxiety and stress, highlighting the importance of implementing preventive measures at an early stage.⁹ Last year, Dentists' Provident paid over £650,000 in claims for psychiatric issues so **remember prevention is better than cure.**¹⁰

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