Build your physical resilience.

When we're under pressure we tend to reach for quick fixes, like stimulants including coffee or chocolate or "comfort" foods high in fat or sugar. A poor diet can compound our problems. While chocolate and coffee may give us an initial boost, they can leave us weary; salty crisps dehydrate the body and the brain, and bring on fatigue, and high fat meals raise our stress hormones. Building our physical resilience helps us to cope better with the stresses life throws at us.

Westfield Health

Boost your immune system.

In order to build your resilience to pressure you need a strong body. That means a powerful immune system boosted by plenty of vitamins and minerals. The best source is food rather than supplements, so eat a balanced, healthy diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables. If you need to snack during the day, try pumpkin or sunflower seeds and fruit (fresh or dried).

Remember, regular exercise is essential for boosting our immune systems. Keeping fit physically improves our mood, relieves pressure and boosts our self-esteem. For more information on how keeping fit can help us in times of stress, please see our factsheet "Exercise for Resilience".

Eat a rainbow.

There are 350,000 different forms of edible plants on this planet. How many do you eat in a week? Variety is essential as different types and colours of food contain different vitamins and minerals; so eat a rainbow and ensure there is a wide range of fruit and vegetables in your diet.

Drink water.

If you want to perform better, drink water! Your brain cells can only operate effectively if they're properly hydrated. Being properly hydrated will improve your concentration, focus and mood and therefore help you to cope better with high pressure situations. A good rule of thumb is to drink the equivalent of at least 6-8 glasses per day. Whether you're at home, work or on the go, remember to keep hydrated!

Get enough sleep.

You can't deal with high pressure situations well if you're 'running on half empty'. Good quality sleep is the only way you can properly recharge your batteries. Plan your sleep and sleep routines carefully. Make sure you get the right amount of sleep for you each day – experts recommend between 7 and 9 hours a night for adults. Improve the quality of your sleep, by going to sleep and getting up at roughly the same time each day (within 30 minutes); and get into the habit of relaxing and winding down before switching off the light – this means putting down the tech – bright screens can prevent your brain producing melatonin making it harder to get a good night's sleep.

Monitor your caffeine intake.

While it's tempting to grab a coffee in an effort to combat fatigue or for a quick burst of energy, once the caffeine kick wears off, it can leave you feeling even more drained, and, depending on when you drink it, it may impact your sleep. Keep an eye on how much caffeine you're drinking daily and consider cutting down or swapping to decaffeinated drinks instead. Caffeine before bedtime is a definite no-no!

Watch your alcohol consumption.

After a long day, sometimes it feels all too easy to reach for a glass of our favourite tipple in an effort to destress and relax. Not only is this merely avoiding the issue and not dealing with the causes of stress, alcohol also impacts negatively on our sleep, can be a major cause of weight gain and may leave us feeling tired and off-colour the next day – definitely not leaving us at our best for managing life's pressures! Don't get into the habit of using alcohol to try and relieve anxiety, look for alternative ways to unwind. If you're concerned about your alcohol intake and are finding it difficult to cut down, please seek help from your GP.

Bouncing back.

If we don't take care of ourselves physically – namely eating healthily, exercising regularly and getting enough sleep - this can leave us out of sorts and impact on our ability to manage life's stresses.

If the pressure is building and you're starting to feel weary and drained, listen to what your body is telling you and take action - don't try to soldier on, this could well leave you feeling worse in the long run.

Part of being resilient is recognising when to seek help, being able to talk to others about the issues you're facing and giving yourself time to rest and recuperate.

We all experience pressure at some point in our lives, but taking good care of ourselves should help give us the energy we need to get us back on track faster.

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> Evidence suggests that good nutrition is essential for our mental health. A balanced diet can improve our mood and give us more energy.