

# RESEARCH FROM MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

*“360 million working days are lost annually in the UK at a cost of £8 billion, and half of these absences are stress related”*

A recent study launched by the University of Bristol on behalf of the Health and Safety Executive, has also revealed that in one week 27,00 people are absent from work with stress related illness.

Therefore stress is definitely a major cause for decreased company productivity and therefore decreased company profits. Because of this, businesses are seeking out inexpensive ways of increasing productivity and lowering health costs. Many people these days work in extremely stressful environments. Those who are desk bound in front of computers suffer from bad posture, muscle fatigue, aches and pains. Employees who commute long distances are prone to “road rage” during journeys. What with phones ringing constantly, PC’s crashing, deadlines to meet and conflicts with colleagues, is it any wonder why so many employees feel drained and exhausted. On top of this, it is thought that up to 17% of employees do not have a lunch break which can dissipate this stress they feel constantly under.

Complementary Therapies are the ideal tool for this! It can help reduce stress and fatigue, increase mental clarity, relax and rejuvenate the body, therefore help productivity by reducing time lost through absenteeism and medical appointments. As an added bonus, it shows commitment to its employees, promoting a feeling of value and appreciation, which will improve morale, as well as reducing stress, related illness.

## Stress in the Workplace

Each year in the UK, 30 working days are lost due to stress or mental illness to every one day lost to industrial disputes. According to the CBI, illness in the workplace has increase by 500% since mid 1950’s and 60% of all visits to health care professionals are for stress related illnesses.

## Causes of Occupational Stress:

- Trapped in unsatisfying job
- Geographic relocation
- Lack of stimulation
- Unsympathetic boss
- Lack of clarity about Jobs
- Hostile customers

- Frequent duty changes or night shifts
- Changes in work practice, requiring new skills to be learned
- Numerous deadlines
- Lack of feedback on performance
- Responsibility without adequate authority
- Unclear goals
- Inadequate rewards - low salary, poor prospects
- Threat of redundancy

### Stress at Work can lead to:

- Reduced productivity
- Poor interpersonal relationships
- High staff turnover
- Poor concentration and judgement

Managing Stress in the workplace can transform a situation from negative to positive, whereby stress can be re-experienced as a motivation to challenge people to reach higher.

Massage, Reiki and Indian Head Massage is well suited to the working environment because of its flexible and portable nature and the fact that the treatment is quick and the recipient does not need to undress. It is a time saving therapy when time is of the essence because the Therapist can come to you.

A treatment normally takes just 20 -30-40 minutes and is therefore perfect for the working environment where time is precious.

### Benefits of Complementary Therapies within the Workplace

On February 12th 2007, the new Healthy Working Lives (HWL) Award Programme was launched. For more information on how your organisation can include health promotion, occupational health and safety, health and the environment, mental health and well-being, community involvement and employability, click on the above link for more information.

Calculations by the Confederation of British Industries indicate that British industry is currently losing around £13 billion every year from sickness absence, the equivalent of 30 million working days. Death rates in Scotland from heart disease, cancer and strokes are higher than in almost any western industrialised country.

If Scottish businesses are to succeed, employers must help their workers to not only minimise the risks of poor health, but gain the many benefits of maintaining good health.

### Benefits to Employees:

- Healthy working conditions
- Health information at work
- A sense of team spirit and reward
- A boost to morale and motivation
- Good management / employee relations
- Benefits of working for a responsible employer
- Fun, social events
- The chance to improve their awareness of health issues and make a difference to their lifestyle

### Benefits to Employers:

- A healthier, happier workforce
- A motivated team with high morale
- Good management/employee relations
- Less sickness absence
- A lower staff turnover
- Positive links with your community