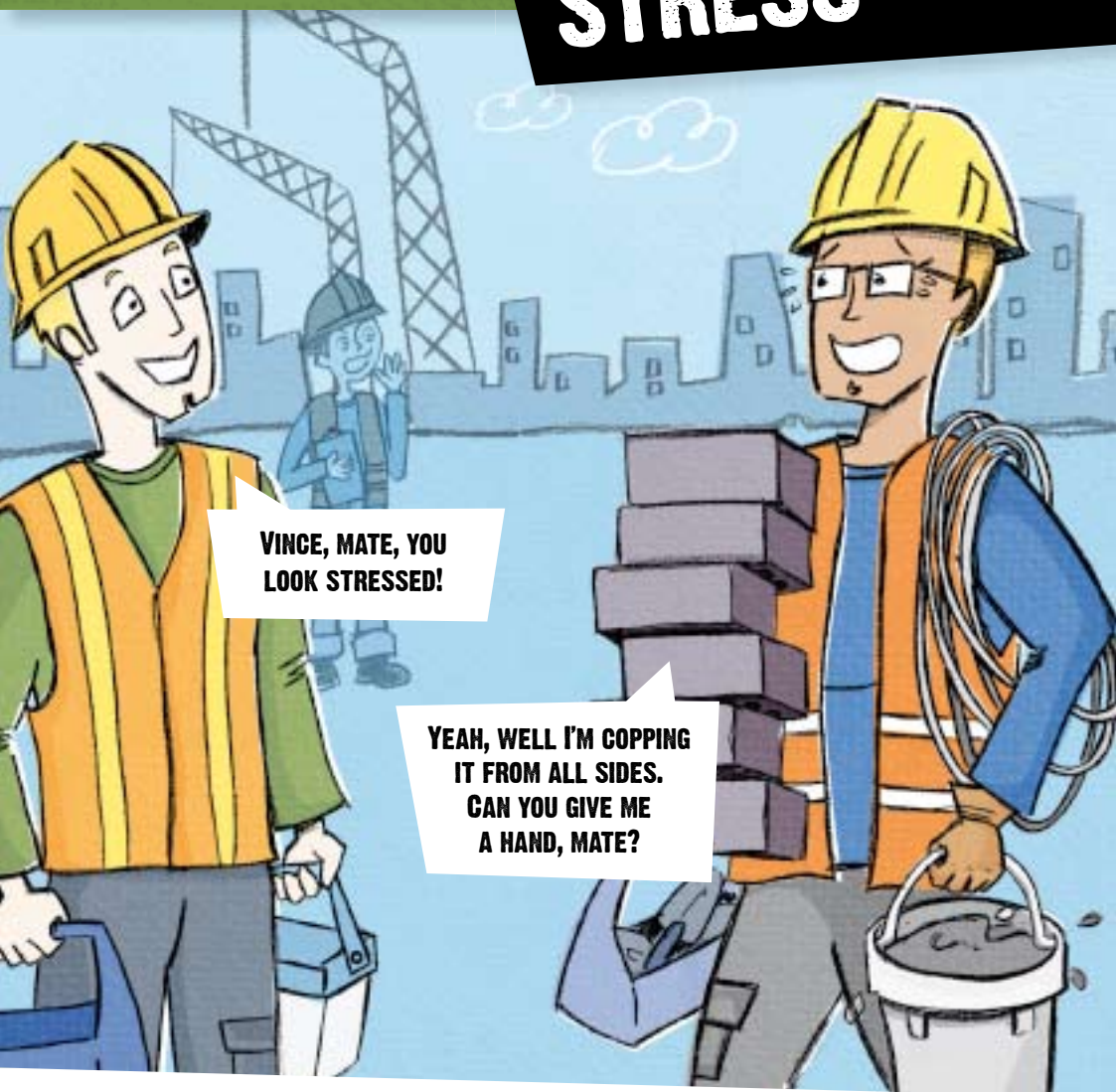


HELPAMATE!

STRESS



VINCE, MATE, YOU
LOOK STRESSED!

YEAH, WELL I'M COPPING
IT FROM ALL SIDES.
CAN YOU GIVE ME
A HAND, MATE?

THE WORKPLACE CAN BE A STRESSFUL ENVIRONMENT, SO IT'S IMPORTANT TO FIND WAYS TO KEEP STRESS AND FATIGUE AT BAY.

IN AUSTRALIA, THE TOTAL COST OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS FOR STRESS-RELATED CONDITIONS IS ESTIMATED AT OVER \$200 MILLION EVERY YEAR.

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is a reaction to external and internal triggers, resulting in a range of effects. It's not just crisis incidents such as an armed hold-up or workplace death that cause stress in the workplace. It can be brought on by everyday factors such as:

- ✓ Long hours
 - ✓ Heavy workload
 - ✓ Workplace changes
 - ✓ Tight deadlines
 - ✓ Job insecurity
 - ✓ Boring work
 - ✓ Lack of training/equipment
 - ✓ Over-supervision
 - ✓ Harassment
 - ✓ Discrimination
 - ✓ Poor relationships with colleagues or bosses
- ✓ Difficulties concentrating or making decisions
 - ✓ Fatigue
 - ✓ Headaches
 - ✓ Heart palpitations
 - ✓ Stomach upsets, such as diarrhoea or constipation
 - ✓ Anger and irritability

THE INDICATORS

Some people are more prone to stress than others – but stress shows itself in a whole host of ways. You may not realise that you are stressed at all. Here are some indicators of stress:

- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope
- ✓ A drop in work performance
- ✓ Increase in sick days or absenteeism
- ✓ Sleeping difficulties, such as insomnia

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP?

Not all stress is just mental or emotional. It can affect your physical health too. It is always a good idea to look at reducing your stress whenever you can. Some useful ways to minimise stress include:

Regular exercise

Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress. Make time for at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times per week. Nothing beats aerobic exercise for releasing pent-up stress and tension.

Healthy eating

Well-nourished bodies are better prepared to cope with stress, so be mindful of what you eat. Start your day right with breakfast, and keep your energy up and your mind clear with balanced, nutritious meals throughout the day.

Reduce caffeine and sugar intake

The temporary 'highs' that chocolate, coffee and sugar provide often end in a crash in your mood and energy. By reducing the amount of coffee, soft drinks, chocolate and sugar snacks in your diet, you'll feel more relaxed and you'll sleep better.

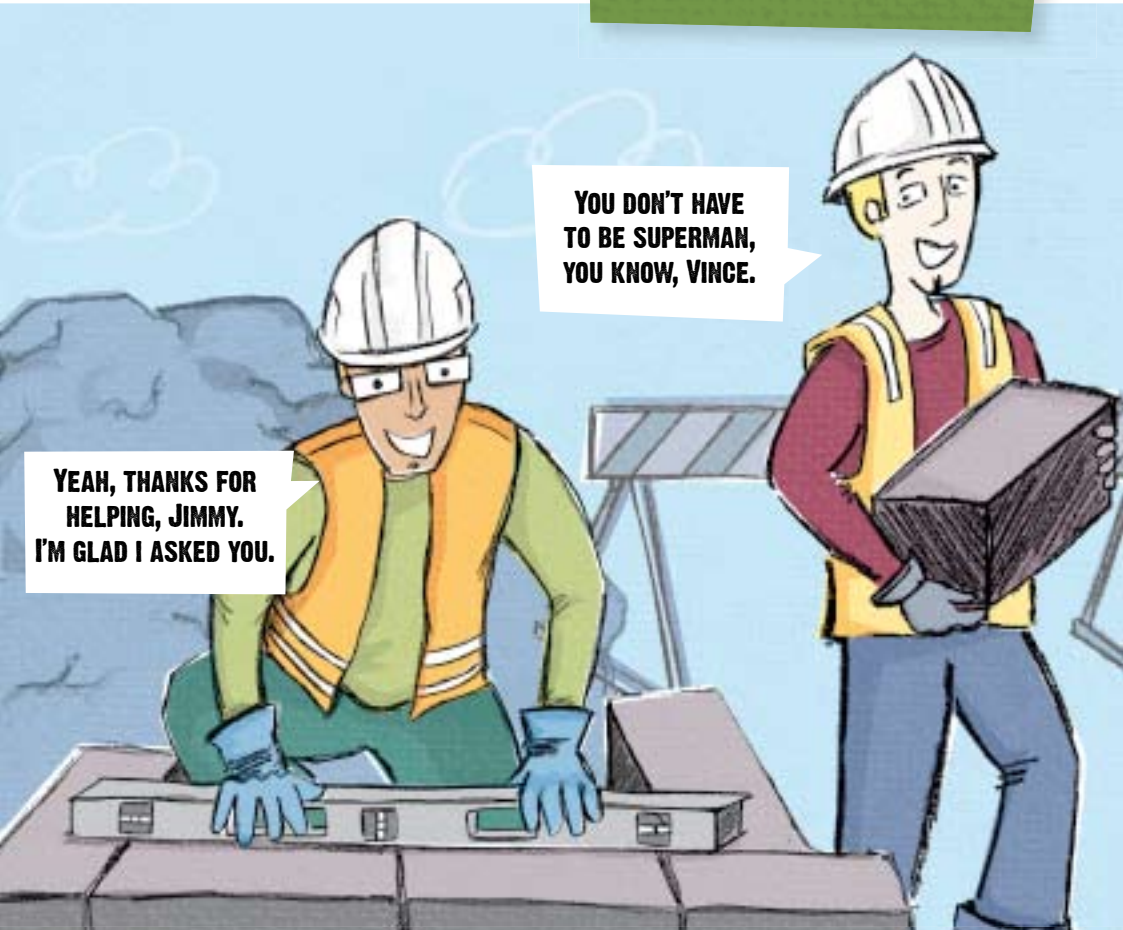
FAST FACTS

Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs

Self-medicating with alcohol or drugs may provide an easy escape from stress, but the relief is only temporary. Don't avoid or mask the issue at hand; deal with problems head-on and with a clear mind.

...continued over page

- ✓ 26% of people rate work stress as the second-largest cause of work-related injury and illness, behind physical strains and sprains.
- ✓ Workplace stress and fatigue is 4 times more likely to contribute to workplace impairment than drugs or alcohol.



IT'S OK TO ASK FOR HELP OR TO SAY 'NO' TO EXCESSIVE WORKING HOURS. TACKLING THINGS BEYOND YOUR LIMIT CAN RESULT IN STRESS, FATIGUE AND EVEN INJURY.

Get enough sleep

Feeling tired will increase your stress because it may cause you to think irrationally. Adequate sleep fuels your mind, as well as your body.

Keep things in perspective

Try not to let things overwhelm you. If you're starting to lose control, try to reassess the situation and approach it from a fresh angle.

Talk about it

Talking about your concerns usually helps you to better deal with them. You can off-load to a mate, or see a trained professional to air your problems.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS STRESSED

Stress is not always considered a serious health issue. However, stress in the workplace is a real concern and can be difficult to talk about.

If you think that a mate may be feeling stressed, talk to them about it. Encourage

them to talk to a trained professional such as a counsellor or psychologist. Other commonsense practices like eating well, getting enough rest and avoiding stimulants can also help a great deal.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ✓ Medicare now offers a rebate for psychology treatment. You can receive one free session per month and a rebate on other appointments, once you are referred by a GP.
- ✓ You can contact Incolink on 9639 3000 (or toll free on 1800 337 789) to get information about its free counselling service for members.
- ✓ There are heaps of things you can do for yourself to combat stress. Making time to relax, maintaining the balance between work and family life, and spending more time doing the things you enjoy are just a start.

HELPAMATE!

For more information and resources on stress management at work, visit the following websites:

www.rehabmanagement.com.au

www.stresstips.com

www.anxietyhelp.com.au

IF IN DOUBT, ALWAYS SPEAK TO A DOCTOR.

Or see an OH&S Rep, who can refer you to someone who can help.

Proudly developed for the building industry by:

