

Identify signs of anxiety and use the following techniques to stay calm.

Learn how to choose the right shoes for the job.



Controlling Workplace Anxiety

It is normal for people to feel nervous or anxious during an interview or before public speaking, but feeling pervasive, irrational anxiety all day is not. The Mental Health Foundation estimates that 4.7 per cent of the United Kingdom suffer from anxiety problems each year. Anxiety in the workplace can have a major impact—individuals who have an anxiety disorder may have difficulty with common workplace expectations such as meeting deadlines or maintaining relationships with peers.

Like other illnesses, anxiety disorders are caused by a combination of biological and environmental factors. The most common symptoms of anxiety disorders include continuous obsessive thoughts, fatigue, extreme feelings of fear and panic, headaches, difficulty speaking and nausea.

Anxiety-relieving Techniques

Though feelings of anxiety can be pervasive, deploying the following techniques both inside and outside of the workplace can help mitigate your symptoms:

- **Move around:** Taking a brief walk or finding a quiet area in the workplace to perform a quick exercise can help alleviate feelings of anxiety. Moving around releases endorphins that can have a calming effect on individuals.

- **Break up large tasks:** Large projects can sometimes seem overwhelming, but by breaking them down into smaller tasks, they may be easier to complete. Try to break down tasks by the hour, and take breaks when necessary to focus on what you have accomplished.
- **Reassure yourself:** Anxiety is often a temporary feeling that becomes an obsessive thought. Before you begin dwelling on one thought for too long, reassure yourself that you will be fine and that the negative feelings will pass. You can also try to focus on something else, or go for a brief walk. Then, re-evaluate your feelings afterwards.
- **Talk to someone:** It can be helpful to communicate your feelings with someone, either in or out of the workplace. Friends and loved ones can offer words of reassurance, and even writing an unrelated email to someone you know can help to slow or stop feelings of anxiety.

Anxiety in the workplace is very common and impacts millions of people on a daily basis. Do not hesitate to contact a trained professional if you feel you need assistance dealing with anxiety.

Nearly 3 in every 10 employees will have a mental health problem in any given year—the majority of which will be anxiety and depressive disorders, according to the Mental Health Foundation.



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Foot Safety at Work

Foot health is a primary concern for all workers. Every year, about 22,000 people in the United Kingdom miss work for more than three days due to foot injuries, according to the HSE. Though all workers need to be conscious of foot safety, those who spend a large portion of their days standing are at an additional risk since foot bones and muscles are designed for mobility and not for long periods of standing or inactivity.

Selecting the Right Shoes for the Job

Selecting improper or ill-fitting footwear is one of the primary causes of foot-related health issues. Unfortunately, many workers select fashionable footwear at the expense of their own health. Keep these tips in the mind when purchasing your next pair of shoes for work:

- Have both of your feet measured when purchasing shoes—they may differ in size.
- If possible, buy shoes in the late afternoon when your feet are more likely to be swollen to their maximum size.
- If your feet are different sizes, buy shoes to fit your larger foot.

- The front of the shoes should have plenty of space for your toes.
- Select a pair of shoes with sufficient arch support. This will help minimise weakness and soreness in the legs and feet.
- Shoes with low, wide-based heels are preferable.

Take Control of Your Foot Health

Taking steps to keep your feet healthy is as important as choosing the right kind of footwear.

- Be sure to wash your feet daily with soap to keep your skin healthy, and trim your toenails to an even and short length.
- Walk whenever possible instead of taking a short drive or using the lift.
- Perform simple stretches such as calf raises throughout the day to keep the muscles of your feet active.
- Soaking your feet in Epsom salt and hot water will help to heal any injuries, even those too small to notice.



Safety in
NUMBERS 1²3

39 per cent

of all work-related illnesses in
2013/14 were due to work-related
stress, depression or anxiety



Source: HSE

Real-life Case Study

Last month, Ginger, a sales representative at a Birmingham financial advising company, decided to purchase a new pair of shoes for work. She selected a pair of fashionable and inexpensive high-heel shoes that she found online.

Just a week after purchasing her new shoes, Ginger began feeling foot and leg pain at work. Instead of consulting a podiatrist, Ginger believed that her pain was the result of not using her leg muscles much at her desk, and she decided to try standing while doing routine tasks such as writing emails and making phone calls.

After another week, Ginger began to feel pain in her upper legs and lower back. She decided to consult a doctor to find out the cause of her discomfort. She was surprised to learn that the shoes she had ordered did not fit properly, and that high heels put a large amount of strain on toes, knees and calf muscles.

Ginger's doctor referred her to a podiatrist, who was able to help Ginger select a pair of comfortable shoes that promoted foot safety.