

This is not a word-for-word transcript.

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**Neil**

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil.

**Becca**

And I'm Becca. Worrying about work or exams, War and climate change in the news. It's no wonder that modern life is stressful. What makes you stress, Neil?

**Neil**

Oh, good question. I think not having enough time to do something, that really makes me stressed out. How about you?

**Becca**

Um. When I'm trying to do something that I've never tried before and I'm not very good at it, that makes me feel really stressed.

**Neil**

I find that stressful, too.

**Becca**

And how do you cope with stressful situations, Neil?

**Neil**

Well, I try to slow down, uh, pause, take a breath and think, 'at some point, probably later today, everything will be okay again.' How about you?

**Becca**

Yeah, same. But in my mind, I'm telling myself that, 'I will be better at what I'm doing. I just need to practise more.'

**Neil**

Hmm. Many young people who feel stressed about the modern world use the word overwhelm to describe their feelings. And overwhelm was also the topic of a

recent BBC World Service programme, What in the World. Here's Iqra Farooq and Claudia Hammond.

### **Claudia Hammond**

So, overwhelm is an emotional state where you are struggling with your current situation. So, you might feel overloaded, you might feel you can't cope, and that might be a temporary thing, hopefully. But if it's not in the longer term, if that becomes more of a kind of **chronic** kind of stress, then that that might lead to **burnout** in the end.

### **Becca**

Feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope with life can become **chronic**, meaning that it lasts for a long time. Overwhelm can lead to **burnout**, mental or physical exhaustion caused by working too hard.

### **Neil**

So, how can we manage the stress in our lives and feel happier and healthier? That's what we'll be discussing in this episode, along with some useful new words and phrases. You'll find all the vocabulary from this episode on our website [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com).

### **Becca**

But before we start, I have a question for you, Neil. One simple way of combating stress is taking time to rest. So, according to research conducted by BBC presenter and psychologist Claudia Hammond, which activity is thought to be the most restful? Is it:

- a) reading for pleasure,
- b) walking in nature, or
- c) listening to music?

### **Neil**

Well, I think they're all quite relaxing, but I'm gonna guess b) walking in nature.

### **Becca**

I'm surprised, Neil! I know you love music. And we'll find out the answer later. One of the most stressful things facing many young people is exams. Here, Claudia Hammond offers some advice for managing exam stress to BBC World Service's What in the World:

### **Claudia Hammond**

...particularly in the exam itself, if you feel stressed, then just knowing that you may well perform better while you're stressed, that this... it **concentrates the mind**, it **sharpens** and you know **nerves** sharpen your thinking and allow you to really do your best.

### **Neil**

It's normal to feel **nerves** before an exam. **Nerves** is an informal word for worry or anxiety, but according to Claudia, **nerves** aren't necessarily bad.

### **Becca**

Yes, **nerves** can help **concentrate the mind**. The phrase **concentrate** or **sharpen the mind** means to think more clearly about something like an actor or an athlete feeling **nerves** before a big performance can help them do their best.

### **Neil**

Claudia recommends other ways to reduce stress as well. These include slowing down and accepting that it's ok to be 'good enough' rather than always trying for perfection. Here, she shares more top tips with Iqra Farooq for BBC World Service's What in the World:

### **Iqra Farooq**

I guess it's - there's no **one-size-fits-all** as well, when it comes to this. So, if someone's listening and thinking, 'I want some top tips on just feeling overwhelmed generally in my life,' what would you say to them?

### **Claudia Hammond**

So, first I would say accept that your **to-do list** is never going to end, it's always going to be there. So, even I know that might sound defeatist, but even if you get to the end of it today, tomorrow there will be something else on it. And that's just life, and that is just signs of a busy life.

### **Becca**

There are many ways to combat stress, not a **one-size-fits-all** solution. The phrase, **one-size-fits-all**, describes trying to apply the same solution to many different problems.

### **Neil**

Claudia's final piece of advice is don't worry too much about your **to-do-list**, the list of all the items you have to do. Why? Because it never ends. Every day there will be something new to add to the list. So, why stress?

**Becca**

Some good advice there, Neil. I think I'll try these techniques next time I feel stressed. And, speaking of ways to de-stress reminds me of my question I asked you earlier. According to research conducted by BBC presenter and psychologist Claudia Hammond, which activity is thought of to be the most restful? And you answered b) walking in nature. Unfortunately, Neil, the answer is a) reading.

**Neil**

Ah well, reading is really relaxing as well.

**Becca**

OK, let's recap the vocabulary from this episode, beginning with the adjective **chronic**, which means continuing for a long time.

**Neil**

**Burnout** is a feeling of physical or mental exhaustion caused by working too hard.

**Becca**

If you say that a difficult situation **sharpens** or **concentrates someone's mind**, you mean that it makes them think clearly.

**Neil**

**Nerves** are an informal word for worry or anxiety.

**Becca**

A **one-size-fits-all** approach tries to apply the same solution to all problems, rather than solving them individually.

**Neil**

And finally, a **to-do list is a list** of all the tasks you have to do. Of course, another way to beat stress is doing something you love - and if that's improving your English then why not visit our website, [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com), where you'll find loads more activities for doing just that! See you again next time, but for now it's goodbye!

**Becca**

Bye!

## VOCABULARY

### **chronic**

continuing for a long time

### **burnout**

physical or mental exhaustion caused by working too hard

### **sharpens/concentrates the mind**

makes you think clearly

### **nerves**

(informal) worry or anxiety

### **one-size-fits-all**

approach which tries to apply the same solution to all problems, instead of solving each problem individually

### **to-do list**

list of all the tasks you have to do