

Career Kickstart

Working under Pressure

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Get things back on track



We all feel like we're under pressure sometimes. And at work, university, or school, it's important to develop the ability to handle pressure without getting too stressed out.

No one is looking for you to be perfect all the time. So you shouldn't stress if something doesn't go exactly to plan. In the workplace, what people want to see is your ability to respond to hiccups and get things back on track.

Here are some tips to help you do exactly that:

- **Don't make rash or emotionally driven decisions:** Take some time to assess the situation and talk it through with someone with more experience, such as a tutor, mentor or work colleague
- **Manage your time:** Make an effort to be well organised; it really does reduce the pressure. Prioritise your tasks and focus on those that you can directly impact. Worrying about something out of your control can add to the pressure
- **Think positively:** Negative thinking can knock your confidence. So look for opportunities in everything you do. Remember the difficult situation you may find yourself will not be made easier by thinking negatively. Positivity will help others around you too.
- **Ask for help if you need it:** If you are short of time, pull together a list of people who might be able to help you, friends, colleagues, teachers or career staff for example. You will achieve more by using the people and resources around you.
- **Keep your focus:** Don't worry about other people's responsibilities; concentrate on your own and what you can achieve

Now try this. Think about a time when you felt under pressure. How did you respond? Were you calm? Or panicky? Did it bring out the best in you or did it stop you in your tracks? Try writing down or drawing a picture to help you visualise your feelings and what influenced them positively.

Exercises like this are good practice as it's very common now for employers to ask for examples on application

forms and they're keen to understand how you have overcome situations like dealing with pressure. When employers ask for these sort of examples, it's called competency-based questioning and it's all about finding out what skills you have through real life examples – from the workplace and outside it. Using the [STAR technique](#) will help you structure your answers to these type of questions.

Here are some examples of the kinds of questions they might ask:

- Tell us about a situation where you have had to deal with an emergency.
- Have you ever missed a deadline? What did you do?
- Have you ever worked as part of a team where a team member unexpectedly dropped out?

And remember, everyone responds to pressure differently. The main thing is to be self-aware and understand how you act in pressurised situations.

To find out more about more, [visit](#):

The National Careers Service website: www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk (England)

Careers Wales website: www.careerswales.com (Wales)

Careers in Scotland website: www.myworldofwork.co.uk (Scotland)