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## WEEKEND

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### Expatriate stress

By Carole Spiers (Pressure Gauge)

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DUBAI IS A city that has great opportunities for career growth and personal development. During my most recent visit to Dubai, it was, therefore, little surprise that I met with a large number of expatriates (from the UK, Europe and Asia) who are in the process of making the city their home.

 During conversations with many of these people, it became clear that while the work environment in Dubai presents numerous opportunities, it can also be a highly stressful place in which to work.

So if you're an expatriate working in Dubai - particularly if you're new to the city - you may also find yourself having to deal with 'stressors' that can stop you from enjoying the success you came here to achieve.

Living and working in a new country, is an exciting and stimulating experience - which is why so many people want to do it. You will be exposed to a culture that may be totally different from your own and a lifestyle that offers many new challenges and opportunities for advancement.

The downside is that the ordinary aspects of day-to-day living can take on a whole new level of complexity. Finding accommodation, buying food, accessing public transport, arranging medical and dental care, conforming to different driving regulations, learning a foreign language, obtaining work permits - all of these are hurdles to be overcome, and at the same time as you're trying to do your best to impress your new employer!

If you're fortunate enough to be working for an organisation that has already pre-arranged your accommodation, then at least you will have a new 'base'. If not, then trying to find somewhere to rent or purchase can make your move even more of a challenge, and it is very easy to end-up feeling isolated, insecure, homesick, lonely and like a 'fish out of water'.

#### New contacts

If you've moved to Dubai to work within your existing employer organisation, then at least you will have a peer group of people around you with whom you share a common bond. If not, it can be difficult to push yourself to network with new people when you don't feel very confident in your new surroundings.

However, your relationships (whether these are new or existing) will be very important to at times when you need support - and, sometimes in a new country, you can feel very lonely.

#### New job

If you need to find new employment, then finding a job can be a challenge as it's hard to know how to get started and who to approach.

You may need to take on a different role to the one you're used to, it will take a while for you to build up your contacts, and it can be problematic knowing who you can trust and who needs to be approached with more caution.

Then, when you are offered employment, there will be remuneration to negotiate, contracts to sign, transport to and from work to consider and there may be issues surrounding tax, opening a bank account etc to deal with.

#### Personal expectations

When you start a new life in a new country, it's tempting to try to be all things to all people.

If you have a family, you may find that you need to be strong for them if they are finding it hard to adapt.

If you have children, these problems will be magnified through the need to find a school or child minder, help them acclimatise to their new surroundings etc - particularly if they have had to leave close friends or family behind in their old home.

If you're a husband, wife or partner, you may very easily find yourself having to juggle many different roles, all of which can put a strain on what may, in some circumstances, already be fragile relationship.

So what can you do? If you feel that problems or challenges like these are holding you back, it's time to start thinking about yourself as much as you do about others, by following these ten key strategies for coping with personal stress:

1. Say "no" to excessive demands.
2. Recognise and acknowledge situations that you cannot change.
3. Use exercise to help work off stress.
4. When you are ill, listen to your body and take action.
5. Avoid excessive use of nicotine, alcohol, coffee or tranquillisers.
6. Recharge your batteries with adequate rest and sleep.



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7. Try to manage your time better - learn to prioritise and delegate.

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9. Find someone who will listen to you - it's important to have a 'sounding board'.

**Key learning poin**

10. To enjoy a better standard of living you need to be relaxed and healthy.

- When you s
- Be aware o

You've left your home to work in a new country because you want a better standard of living and to enjoy your life

**Carole Spiers, the regular BBC broad motivational speaker welcomed. Each I Spiers at: ktwkd@**

