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## Stress and stress management

### When work is stimulating

‘My name is Patricia and I’m a university lecturer. I chose this profession because I wanted to do something **rewarding**: something that gave me the satisfaction. Ten years ago, when I started in this job, I had lots to do, but I enjoyed it: preparing and giving lectures, discussing students’ work with them and marking it. I felt **stretched**: I had the feeling that work could sometimes be difficult, but that was **stimulating**, it interested me and made me feel good. It was certainly **challenging**: difficult, but in an interesting and enjoyable way.’

### When stimulation turns to stress

‘In the last few years there has been more and more administrative work, with no time for reading or research. I felt **pressure** building up. I began to feel **overwhelmed** by work: I felt as if I wasn’t able to do it. I was **under stress**; very worried about my work. I became ill, and I’m sure this was caused by stress: it was **stress-induced**.

Luckily, I was able to deal with the **stresses and strains** (pressures) of my job by starting to work part-time. I was luckier than one of my colleagues, who **became** so **stressed out** because of **overwork** that he had a **nervous breakdown**; he was so worried about work that he couldn’t sleep or work, and had to give up. He’s completely **burned out**, so stressed and tired by his work that he will never be able to work again. **Burnout** is an increasingly common problem among my colleagues.’

### Downshifting

‘Many people want to get away from the **rat race** or the **treadmill**, the feeling that work is too competitive, and are looking for **lifestyles** and are less stressful or completely **unstressful**, a more relaxed ways of living, perhaps in the country. Some people work from home to be near their family and have a better **quality of life**, such as more **quality time** with their children: not just preparing meals for them and taking them to school, etc.

Choosing to live and work in a less stressful way is **downshifting** or **rebalancing**, and people who do this are **downshifters**.