

READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 14–26**, which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

Stress Less

How busy is too busy? For some it means sometimes having to have a short lunch; for others it may mean missing lunch altogether. For a few, it is not being able to take a day off once a month. Then there is a group of people for whom working every evening and weekend is normal, and feeling stressed is taken for granted. For most senior executives, workloads swing between extremely busy and frenzied. Neil Plumridge, vice-president of a management consultancy company, says that his weeks vary from a 'manageable' 45 hours to 80 hours, but average 60 hours.

Three signs warn Plumridge about his workload: sleep, scheduling and family. He knows he is doing too much when he gets less than six hours' sleep for three consecutive nights, when he is constantly having to reschedule appointments, and when he misses a family birthday or anniversary. 'Then,' he says, 'I know things are out of control.' Plumridge states that stress is often caused by his having unrealistic expectations of himself. 'I'll promise a client that I'll do something tomorrow, and then I'll promise another client that I'll do the same thing, when I know it's not going to happen. I could have said: "Why don't I give that to you in 48 hours?" The client wouldn't care.'

Over-committing is something people experience as an individual problem. However, new research indicates that people may be designed to over-commit. A study in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* shows that people always believe that they will be less busy in the future. This is a misapprehension according to the authors of the report, Gal Zauberman of the University of North Carolina and John Lynch of Duke University. 'On average, an individual will be just as busy two weeks or a month from now as he or she is today. But that is not how it appears in everyday life,' they say. 'People make commitments long in advance that they would never make if the same commitments required immediate action. They discount future time investments relatively steeply.'

Being 'too busy' is highly subjective, but for any individual there are some concrete signs of stress: disturbed sleep and declining mental and physical health are the most common examples. Figures for National Workers' Compensation (insurance against injury caused by work) show that stress causes the most loss of time of any workplace injury: employees suffering stress are absent from work for an average of 16.6 weeks. The effects of stress are also expensive. The Australian Government insurer reports that, in 2003–2004, claims for stress-related psychological injury accounted for 7% of insurance claims, but almost 27% of the amount paid out in claim payments.

Experts say the key to dealing with stress is not to focus on relief — a game of golf or a massage — but to reassess workloads. Neil Plumridge says he makes it a priority to work out what has to change: that might mean allocating extra staff to a job, allowing more time, or changing expectations. He also relies on the advice of colleagues, saying that his peers coach each other on business problems: 'Just a fresh pair of eyes over an issue can help,' he states.

Executive stress is not confined to big organisations. Vanessa Stoykov has been running her own advertising agency and public relations business for seven years. Her company has grown so fast that it appeared on the *Business Review Weekly* 'Fast 100' list of fastest-growing small enterprises in 2004, just after Stoykov had her first child. In 2005, revenue was projected to double to \$2.4 million. She had just had her second child. With a fast-growing business and two small children, Stoykov says she has mastered the art of caring for children, typing, and talking on the phone at the same time. But, unlike many others, she appears to thrive on the mental stimulation of running her own business, despite the stress.

Jan Elsner, a psychologist who specialises in executive coaching, says that doing well on a demanding workload is typical of senior executives. Some people work best with high-adrenaline periods followed by quieter times, while others thrive under sustained pressure. Elsner's practice is based on a movement known as positive psychology, a school of thought that argues that positive experiences — feeling engaged and challenged, for example — do not balance out negative experiences such as stress; instead they help people increase their resilience over time. Elsner says that many of the senior business people she coaches are increasingly relying more on regulating stress through methods such as meditation. She points to research showing that meditation can alter the biochemistry of the brain and the way that brains and bodies react to stress.

Some experts believe there is too much emphasis on treating job stress as an individual problem. Tony LaMontagne, of the University of Melbourne, says that while personality traits do have some effect on stress, it is systemic stressors — qualities of job roles and organisations themselves — that have a far greater effect. His recent research shows that the major predictor of stress is the level of job control a person has. The best type of job combines challenging work with high autonomy. The worst jobs combine challenging work and low control. People with demanding jobs but little autonomy have up to four times the probability of depression and more than double the risk of heart attack.

Questions 14–18

Look at the following statements (Questions 14–18) and the list of people below.

Match each statement with the correct person, **A–D**.

Write the correct letter, **A–D**, in boxes 14–18 on your answer sheet.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

- 14** High-level workers tend to react positively to stress
- 15** Stress levels are increased by trying to please customers
- 16** Support from other workers may relieve stress
- 17** Lack of independence at work is often responsible for stress
- 18** Workers commonly expect their workloads to lessen over time

List of People

- A** Neil Plumridge
- B** Gal Zauberman and John Lynch
- C** Jan Elsner
- D** Tony LaMontagne

Questions 19–21

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**.

Write the correct letter in boxes 19–21 on your answer sheet.

- 19** Which of the following is **NOT** mentioned by Neil Plumridge as an indication that his workload is too heavy?
- A** an inability to keep to his schedule
 - B** inattention to family celebrations
 - C** a lack of concentration on a task
 - D** a period of insufficient sleep
- 20** Which method of lessening work stress is **NOT** suggested by Neil Plumridge?
- A** rethinking ideas of what can be achieved
 - B** extending the deadline for completing the task
 - C** using more workers on a project
 - D** taking more time off for sport or other recreation
- 21** According to Jan Elsner, meditation offers a method of
- A** taking a worker's mind off his troubles.
 - B** changing the physical response to stress.
 - C** resting more effectively.
 - D** encouraging executives to take breaks.

Questions 22–26

Complete the summary below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 22–26 on your answer sheet.

Stress: its effects and how to reduce it

Statistics on workers' compensation show that people take more time off work due to stress than for any other **22** _____ at work. On average, workers who take time off because of stress stay away for **23** _____. This absence comes at a high price — while the number of insurance claims due to stress amount to only **24** _____ of the total, they account for a much higher proportion of the cost of claim payments.

Experts believe that seeking to relieve stress through physical therapies such as sport or **25** _____ may be less effective than simply reviewing your **26** _____.

配对题 (14–18)

题号	答案	精确定位句 (英文摘录)	题干要点翻译	解释与同义改写
14	C	“doing well on a demanding workload is typical of senior executives... some... thrive under sustained pressure.”	“高层员工往往对压力反应积极”	senior executives = 高层/高水平员工; doing well / thrive under sustained pressure = 在压力下表现良好 → 积极反应。 来源: Jan Elsner 段。
15	A	“I’ll promise a client that I’ll do something tomorrow, and then... when I know it’s not going to happen... stress is often caused by his having unrealistic expectations of himself.”	“取悦客户会提高压力水平”	Plumridge 为取悦/满足客户而过度承诺 (over-promise), 导致压力上升。虽文本直述“对自己期望不切实际”, 但触发场景正是对客户的承诺。人—Neil Plumridge。
16	A	“He also relies on the advice of colleagues, saying that his peers coach each other... ‘Just a fresh pair of eyes over an issue can help.’”	“来自同事的支持可缓解压力”	直接表明同事的建议/互相辅导能帮助缓解业务难题 → 减压。人—Neil Plumridge。
17	D	“the major predictor of stress is the level of job control... The worst jobs... low control... little autonomy...”	“工作中缺乏自主性常导致压力”	job control / autonomy 少 → 压力/抑郁风险更高。人—Tony LaMontagne。
18	B	“people always believe that they will be less busy in the future... make commitments long in advance...”	“员工通常预期工作量会随时间减少”	直对应: 预期将来不忙 → 以为工作会变少。人—Gal Zauberman & John Lynch。

单选题 (19–21)

题号	答案	精确定位句 (英文摘录)	题干要点翻译	解析
19	C	“he gets less than six hours’ sleep... when he is constantly having to reschedule appointments, and when he misses a family birthday or anniversary.”	“哪一项未被提到为工作过重的信号?”	文中提到: 失眠 (D)、重排日程 (A)、错过家人庆祝 (B)。未提到“专注力下降” (C), 故选 C。
20	D	“key... is not to focus on relief — a game of golf or a massage — but to reassess workloads... allocating extra staff, allowing more time, or changing expectations.”	“哪种减压方法不是 Plumridge 建议的?”	建议: A 改变期望; B 延长期限; C 增加人手。不建议把精力放在娱乐/运动等“休闲放松” (D) 上 → 选 D。
21	B	“meditation can alter the biochemistry of the brain and the way that brains and bodies react to stress.”	“Elsner 认为冥想提供了哪种方式?”	冥想改变机体对压力的反应 (生化层面) = 改变生理反应 → 选 B。

概要填空 (Questions 22–26)

规则: 每空 不超过两个词/或数字。按原文同义复现。

空格	正确答案	精确定位 (英文摘录)	题干要点翻译	说明
22	injury	“stress causes the most loss of time of any workplace injury.”	由于压力请假时间多于任何其他 22 ____ at work	题干已含 at work, 填 injury (避免“workplace injury at work”的赘余)。
23	16.6 weeks	“absent from work for an average of 16.6 weeks.”	平均离岗时长为 ____	直接数字短语 16.6 weeks。
24	7%	“claims... accounted for 7% of insurance claims...”	理赔数量仅占总数的 ____	取原文百分比。
25	massage	“not... relief — a game of golf or a massage — but to reassess workloads.”	如运动或 ____ 等理疗	单词 massage。
26	workload	“but to reassess workloads.”	不如简单回顾你的 ____ 更有效	概要为二人称单数, 落地为 workload。