

## 8 Tips to Help Reduce Your Mental Load

**Relationships Australia WA has developed a range of tip sheets to help support you during difficult times. This guide is for anyone feeling stretched by the invisible pressure of balancing work, home life and multiple responsibilities.**

When life feels busy, it is not just the number of tasks that can wear you down. It is the constant thinking behind them. Working, parenting, caring, managing a household, and staying connected. Many people are holding multiple roles at once, and even when you feel like you are coping, it can still be exhausting.

Mental load goes beyond a full schedule. It is the planning, remembering, organising, anticipating and constant decision-making that sit behind daily life. Much of this invisible work happens in the background, yet it takes real mental energy.

Over time, carrying so much in your head can affect focus, patience, confidence, and overall well-being. While anyone can experience mental load, it often falls more heavily on those juggling multiple responsibilities.

At times, the demands may simply be too much. In these moments, the most helpful thing you can do for yourself, and for those around you, is to step back and focus on what is essential. Doing less is not giving up. It is a thoughtful way to protect your well-being and sustain your capacity.

**The good news is that there are practical ways to reduce the pressure and create more space in your day.**

### 1. Make the Invisible Visible

Mental load often stays hidden because it happens in your head. A good first step is to write it down.

List everything you are currently responsible for, including planning, organising, and emotional support. Seeing it on paper can bring clarity and validation. It can also open up conversations with your partner, family, or team about sharing responsibilities more fairly.

When others understand the full picture, they are often more willing and able to step in.

### 2. Reprioritise Your Expectations

Not everything needs to be done perfectly, or even immediately. When life feels full, ask yourself:

- What truly needs my attention this week?
- What can wait?
- What can be done differently?

This may mean simplifying meals, saying no to extra commitments, or accepting that some things will be “good enough.” Letting go of unrealistic standards can create breathing space for what matters most.

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Not being able to do everything does not mean you are failing. It means you are human, in a world that asks a lot of you. When things feel overwhelming, it is okay to say, “just for now, that can wait.” This can ease pressure and help you focus on what matters most.

### 3. Share the Thinking, Not Just the Doing

Delegating a task is helpful. Sharing the responsibility for planning and remembering is even more powerful.

Instead of asking someone to “help,” consider dividing ownership. For example, one person manages school communication, another manages household bills. Clear ownership reduces the need to supervise or remind.

In workplaces, clarify roles and expectations to prevent one person from carrying the unseen coordination work.

### 4. Create External Systems

Your brain is not meant to store everything.

Use shared calendars, reminder apps, whiteboards, or weekly planning sessions to move tasks out of your head and into a system. A simple family meeting once a week can align schedules and reduce last-minute stress.

External systems reduce the mental juggling and free up cognitive space.

### 5. Reduce Decision Fatigue

Every decision uses mental energy. When you make hundreds of small choices each day, they add up.

It can be helpful to look for ways to simplify routine decisions. Rotate a set meal plan. Create standard morning or evening routines. Set regular days for certain tasks. This helps limit choices where possible.

Reducing small, repeated decisions preserves energy for the things that matter most.

### 6. Notice the Emotional Load

Mental load is not only about tasks. It also includes emotional labour, such as mediating conflict, anticipating others' needs, and managing feelings in a household or team.

If you notice you are carrying the emotional temperature of everyone around you, it may be time to set boundaries. Encourage open communication and shared responsibility for emotional well-being.

You don't have to hold everything together alone.

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### 7. Create Clear Start and Finish Points

Mental load can sometimes feel endless because many of our responsibilities have no clear boundaries.

Where possible, try to create intentional start and finish points in your day. This might mean a short morning planning ritual, setting a clear end to your workday, or writing down tomorrow's priorities before you switch off at night.

When your brain knows there is a structured time to think about tasks, it is less likely to keep cycling through them.

### 8. Consider When Extra Support Could Help

If mental load feels constant, overwhelming or begins to affect your sleep, relationships, or work performance, it may be time to seek additional support.

Relationships Australia WA's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers confidential counselling to help you explore what is contributing to the pressure and develop practical strategies to manage it or you can contact us for a private appointment.

Seeking support early can reduce the risk of burnout and provide practical tools tailored to your situation.

## A Gentle Reminder

Mental load builds quietly. It does not always look dramatic, but over time it can weigh heavily.

Reducing your mental load is not about doing less of what matters, but about doing things more sustainably. Small, practical changes can create meaningful relief and help you feel more present in your work, relationships and daily life.

Be kind to yourself in the process. You are not expected to carry everything, all the time. Showing yourself compassion, especially when things feel like "too much," is not a luxury, it is part of caring for your well-being.