Managing Stress

10 Tips to Keep You Sane
Tricia Nolfi

Write 'em down!
We know the impact...

- 43% of all adults suffer adverse health effects from stress.
- 75% - 90% of all doctor visits are for stress-related illnesses and complaints.
- Stress plays a part in headaches, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart problems, asthma, arthritis, depression, and anxiety.
- OSHA declared stress a hazard in the workplace and can cost employers more than 300 billion annually.
- The lifetime prevalence of an emotional disorder is more than 50%, often due to chronic, untreated stress reactions.

Know Your Stress Triggers

When you begin experiencing stress, make a note in a "stress diary" indicating the time, place, context, etc.

How did you feel emotionally and physically?

Rate your stress level from 1-10

Goal: Understand causes of stress so you can learn how to avoid stressful situations.
Avoid Caffeine, Alcohol, and Nicotine

Be aware of what you put in your body!

Caffeine and nicotine act as stimulants and can increase your levels of stress.

In smaller quantities, alcohol can act as a stimulant. Larger quantities can disrupt sleep (increasing stress levels the following day).

Goal: A healthy, well-balanced diet that includes beneficial beverages.

Get Active

Stressful situations increase the level of stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol, in your body.

Exercise can metabolize those excess stress hormones and make you relaxed.

When you start feeling stressed, go for a walk, get fresh air, do some yoga stretches, or head to the gym.

Goal: Incorporate physical activity into your daily routine to keep stress hormones at bay.
Get More Sleep

A double-edged sword: A lack of sleep causes stress; stress disrupts our sleep.

Try relaxation techniques before bed such as meditations, a warm bath, reading, or listening to soothing music.

Avoid screens an hour before bed. Also avoid caffeine, alcohol, and sweets before bedtime.

Goal: Keep a consistent sleep pattern and avoid wake triggers before bed.

Wisely Manage Your Time

In 2017, almost 50% of American workers did not use their PTO and did so because they believed that no one else can do their job, they feared repercussions from their supervisor, or that believed they must do so to get ahead.

Stress impacts cognitive abilities such as concentration, decision-making, and memory.

Don't let your "To Do" list become a source of your stress. Accept the limitations of what you can accomplish each day.

Goal: Set reasonable limits on your time and schedule respite each week.
Learn To Say "No"

A common cause of stress is having to do too much with too little time; and we oftentimes say "yes" when we feel we can't say "no."

Many of us are programmed to say "yes" because during our upbringing, we were taught that it was polite to do so.

Say "no" for the sake of your time. By doing so, you are saying "yes" to things you cherish in your life.

Goal: When considering a request, pause and determine if it will coincide your priorities. If not, graciously decline.

Give Yourself a Permission Slip

We often create rules for ourselves that prevent us from being who we really are or that prevent us from doing what we really want to do.

These constraints can make us feel that we are not being true to ourselves, thus causing stress.

Give yourself permission to do something (or not!) that is different than what you've done in the past or be bold and "color outside the lines"!

Goal: Give yourself a 'permission slip' to do something you have been fearful to do.
Focus on Gratitude

Focusing on the good things in your life can help you overcome stress.

Studies have shown that by making a habit of keeping track of things that you are grateful for can help you train your brain to focus on the positive.

Keep a list—mentally or in writing—of those things in your life for which you are grateful.

Goal: Each day, think of one thing for which you are grateful.

Laughter IS the best medicine!

Like its arch-enemy, stress, laughter induces physical changes in your body.

Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain.

Find things that make you smile and laugh such as pictures, videos, satirical books, and jokes and reverse stressful situations.

Goal: Seek an opportunity to laugh each day.
Develop a Plan That Works for YOU

Developing an action plan to reduce stress and stressors in your life will ensure that you can reach your goals.

Identify life changes that make sense for you and write them down. Focus on the "low hanging fruit" at first so that you feel a sense of accomplishment.

Goal: Develop a 6-month plan of changes you will make to reduce stress in your life.

My first three steps...
Session Resources


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