

Balanced Living

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How to Beat Serious Stress

Every day we face stressful events. Most of these events are minor. But other events are clearly major sources of stress. These include things such as a marriage or divorce, or trouble at home or work. You may need help from others, such as a professional counselor, to judge how stressful a situation really is. After that, you can put in order what you need to get done. You also need to look at the resources available to help you understand and work through the problem. When you're faced with a highly stressful event in your life, these methods may help you cope:

- **Don't make unneeded changes in your life.** Instead, save what energy you have for dealing with the major stressor at hand. If possible, try to make your work and home environments stable while working out the main problem.
- **Quiet your mind.** Use deep breathing and visualization methods to calm your mind and slow your breathing. When you're stressed, your mind can make things seem worse. It does this by creating endless versions of coming disaster. This affects your body, too. The body can't tell the difference between what's real and what's not. So it reacts with a greater physical response.
- **Stay in the present.** You can calm both your mind and your body by keeping your mind in the present. The present is hardly ever as stressful as an imagined future or a past full of regrets. To stay in the present, center your attention on your breathing, a sound or visual pattern, a repetitive movement, or meditation.
- **Bravely and aggressively face the stressor.** Don't just ignore whatever is causing you stress. Instead, carefully think about the seriousness of the problem. But don't blow it out of proportion. Ask yourself, "What's the worst thing that is realistically likely to happen?" Then remind yourself of all the good things that will still be a part of your life even if the worst happens. Talk with others to confirm your view of the stressor. Make a special effort to speak to family, friends, or co-workers who have had similar experiences.
- **Review your coping responses.** Confidence is helpful in fighting stress. And it builds on memories of past successes. Think about successes you've had with other stressful life events. Recall some of the things you did to cope. Think about writing this down.
- **Take action.** Commit to a reasonable way to deal with what is causing you stress. Action is powerful in helping you to reduce stress. Studies show that your body lowers the amount of a powerful stress hormone (epinephrine) when you shift into action. Don't stop taking action because you're afraid you'll make the wrong decision. There are many ways to successfully handle a stressful situation.
- **Take time out to relax.** At least once or twice a day, take time to calm down by relaxing. Try listening to soothing music, taking a walk, gardening, reading, or exercising. You could also choose to do more formal relaxation such as deep breathing or meditation.
- **Be mindful of your time.** Consider making a day-to-day prioritized list of what you need to do. This can help decrease a sense of being overwhelmed.
- **Get enough sleep.** Lack of sleep can cause additional physical and emotional problems, such as drowsiness, memory problems, and trouble concentrating.
- **Avoid alcohol and drugs.** Far from helping you cope, these can actually make symptoms worse.

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The Power of Laughter

One aspect of self-care that is often overlooked is laughter. The average adult laughs 17 times a day while a child laughs 300 times a day. Though you are probably focused on completing your obligations each day, that doesn't mean you can't find time for humor and lightheartedness. As E. E. Cummings said, "The most wasted of all days is one without laughter." Here are some of the benefits of seeking out laughter and how to go about incorporating it into your day.

Benefits of Laughter

Embrace the moments of levity in your life. Finding humor and laughter in stressful situations can provide a sense of perspective and turn an overwhelming moment into a manageable challenge. Laughing can reduce stress and improve your mood, giving you more emotional space to handle difficult experiences. Additionally, it's good for your physical health by helping to enhance your immune system and relieve pain.

Seek Out Joy and Laughter

Think about the times you belly laughed until you cried. Who were you with? Spend more time with them. After interactions with people, ask yourself, "Do I feel better or worse?" Life is too short to be with people who bring you down. Having a good sense of humor will also make others want to be around you. If you know you're going to experience a particularly difficult period in your life, bolster your emotional defenses by planning a calendar of events or activities with the people who you enjoy being around. A positive mood is infectious, and gathering fun, lighthearted people around you during tough times can make the experience easier to work through.

Other Sources of Humor

Social media can potentially be a time waster and cause feelings of negativity. However, you can curate your feed so that it brings you a steady stream of positivity and humor. Follow accounts that make you laugh or bring light to your day. Alternatively, unfollow accounts that tend to make you feel down. You could listen to comedy podcasts during your commute to school or work or while running errands. There are also numerous comedy specials, shows, and movies on streaming platforms. Ask your friends and classmates for recommendations and remember the shows you enjoyed to share with others who might need a good laugh to turn around a particularly tough day.

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Keeping Your Employees Informed About Key Issues

Communication is a key element to successful organizations. By continuously updating your employees about the status of the organization, you provide them a sense of community and trust among and between all levels of staff.

Communicating About Other Departments

Employees may have questions about how other departments affect their work, and how their work affects other departments. In order to keep a positive work atmosphere that promotes healthy communication, arrange meetings between groups and departments.

Communicating About Customers

Have employees ask customers for written and oral feedback. Share these comments and suggestions at staff meetings.



Communicating With Workers About the Company's Financial Status

Share with employees as much as you can, explaining how each team has affected the company's financial picture. Supervisors can use sales or supply expense reports to demonstrate how much each team has contributed.

Communicating About Outside Competition

Use outside, competing companies to inspire a competitive edge to your workforce. Examining competing products during meetings is a great way to discuss the competition your company is up against, and generate ideas to help set your company apart from the competition. Mutual vendors and distributors can also give supervisors insight into how your company and outside companies are viewed in your market.

Communicating About Job Performance

Tell your employees daily about job performance. Clearly defining goals and reminding employees of these goals is crucial to company success and allows employees to critique their own performance.

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Webinar Now Available:

Strategies for Stress Relief

Everyone is stressed. The responsibilities of modern living can be overwhelming. But is it really possible to learn techniques and strategies to manage and relieve stress? Yes! In this seminar, we will talk about the symptoms of stress, how they manifest in day-to-day life and ways to effectively manage stress. The goal of this seminar is to help every participant develop willingness to employ at least one new strategy towards feeling less stressed.

[Log-in](#) any time this month to watch the webinar!



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