

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING STRESS



Use whatever stress management strategies suit you, and work for you, in any situation. If you don't know of any, we have some tips below. Remember, incorporate stress-beating exercises into your daily routine to build on your mental fitness.

Check-in with your feelings and re-assess the situation. Is it all as bad as you think? Can you step back and view the issue with a positive perspective? Self-talk - what we tell ourselves - is probably one of the biggest things that causes us stress.

1. How much do you PERSONALISE the issue? 'This is all on me, it's all my fault' versus 'Well there are other factors that come into play here.'
2. PERMANENCE 'This is all over, I'll never bounce back from this' versus 'This is just a temporary setback, what resources do I need to draw on to move forward?'
3. PERVASIVENESS 'My whole life is a disaster, nothing goes right' versus 'It's just this one exam, there are other things that are going well.'

Try to challenge and reframe your thinking:

- 'What's the worst that can happen?'
- 'What's another way of looking at this?'
- 'How do I know that to be true/that they're thinking that about me?'
- 'Maybe I did better than I thought, let's wait and see'

Change your self-talk and you change your perspective on an issue, with the flow-on benefit of improving your mood.

SHORT TERM TACTICS TO BATTLE WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU, NOW!

- **Take a break!** Make the most of the time out by walking or stretching as even small movements can regenerate your mind.
- **Let go ...** allow yourself to understand that you can't control, change, or perfect, everything in life and that sometimes the best thing to do is to let go.
- **Use acupuncture** - a traditional Chinese medicine technique, which helps to calm down your nervous system.

- **Exercise** releases endorphins and feel-good hormones.
- **Float tanks** enable you to bathe in magnesium and soak up the wonderful benefits they bring, while switching off from the outside world.

THE LONG-TERM BUILDING BLOCKS THAT BUILDS RESILIENCE TOWARDS STRESS

- **Make healthy choices** - even on those days when you want to skip the gym and crack open a beer/ wine and eat a whole pizza. The links between diet and mental health is growing, 'Evidence is steadily growing for the relationship between dietary quality (and potential nutritional deficiencies) and mental health.' (*Lancet Psychiatry*)
- **Seek inner calm** - reduce any emotional tension through deep breathing and mediation. You can start practicing these techniques today. When you practice mindfulness, you can release emotions that may have been causing the body physical stress. Much like exercise, research has shown that even meditating briefly can reap immediate benefits.
- **Learn what triggers your stress** - if you can pinpoint the exact/underlying causes for stress, you may be able to adapt your response or lifestyle so you can better cope.
- **Yoga** - which helps you to become in tune with your breath, your mind and body.
- **Tapping (Emotional Freedom Technique)** - tapping, also known as Emotional Freedom Techniques, or EFT, is a psychological acupuncture technique derived from Chinese medicine.
- **Continue maintaining connections with others** - connections with others and meaningful relationships are one of the best ways for us to build our resilience.

Reach out and seek professional advice and/or coaching. Speaking with a friend can go a long way to make sense of the causes of your anxiety. And if you're seeking impartial support, you can always contact a Converge consultant.

Find out more or book an appointment:

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USEFUL (AND FREE!) APPS

Happify – is an engaging, diverse and overall, fun, app that enhances users' positive psychology. TIP: If you find games fun, try Personal Zen as well.

Colorfy – the widely successful colouring books are now in app form!

Pacifica – allows you to track your emotions and matches activities to suit. Highly interactive and personable.

Breathe2Relax – this will interest those who would like to learn more about deep breathing and the effects of healthy destressing on your body. You can login, but it's not required to use the basic applications.

Stop, Breathe and Think – this is a great app for beginners who want an introduction to mindfulness and meditation.

REFERENCES

National Health Service UK, <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/reduce-stress/> 7 January, 2019.

American Psychological Society, <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/manage-stress.aspx> 7 January, 2019.

Anxiety and Depression Association of America, <https://adaa.org/tips-manage-anxiety-and-stress> 7 January, 2019.

Find out more or book an appointment:

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