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6 Ways to Beat Stress

Relieve stress, even when you're already feeling totally stressed out.



Are you feeling stressed out? These days, many people are. Luckily, there are numerous ways to try to reduce stress. But how do you know which to choose when your time is already stretched to the max? That depends on the type of stress you are dealing with. Is the event controllable? Is the stress *chronic* — for example, from your job — or *situational*, from a recent experience? Are you already in a high-stress state, or are you hoping to build skills that help you ward off future stress?

Following are six effective ways to reduce stress when you are already totally stressed out:

1. Exercise.

When you start to feel your stomach get knotted, exercise is the best medicine. Exercise is commonly applauded for its positive impacts on disease and overall health, but exercise has also reliably been shown to boost mood. The higher the intensity of the workout, the more you will benefit.

2. Develop a challenge mindset.

Just about any event in life can cause stress, depending on whether it's interpreted as a challenge or a threat. If you feel threatened by a situation, you'll be stressed. But if you instead view it as a *challenge* — or an opportunity to overcome adversity — you may be able to transform some of your stress into invigoration. So practice viewing your stress as a challenge — and have confidence that you can overcome that challenge.

3. Breathe deep.

Deep breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which is sometimes referred to as the “brakes” for stress. Stop and take a few deep breaths when you start to feel yourself getting tense or agitated.

4. Practice acceptance.

The common adage, “Accept the things you can not change” is indeed good advice when it comes to stress. Reflect on whether you can change what is causing you stress, or if you should try to accept it.

5. Find solutions.

The second half of the adage above is “change the things you can.” Indeed, finding solutions to the problems that are causing your stress is a more effective way to reduce stress when what is causing your stress can be changed. So if you can change your situation, choose this technique.

6. Limit caffeine.

Caffeine affects your body in ways that increase anxiety and reduce sleep, prohibiting your recovery from stress. So to decrease your overall stress level, cut out the coffee and soda.

In sum: Stress is never easy, but if you understand its origins, you can begin to make wiser decisions about how to stop it. And these six stress-busting techniques can help.

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