

7 Strategies for Fighting Stress



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If you're reading this article, perhaps it's because the title has drawn you in. Maybe you're stressed out right now or have been so recently.

A critical situation at work, a personal problem, a difficult decision, a complicated relationship with a supervisor or colleague, working against the clock and managing uncertainty are situations that involve high levels of stress. At times, even when everything is going well in your personal and professional life, you might still feel stressed. Numerous studies confirm that stress has much more to do with how we handle situations than with the situations themselves.

In the workplace, what causes stress for some people can motivate others. For example, giving a presentation at a shareholder meeting can be agonizing for some and energizing for others. Stress is closely linked to our inner world and our perception of reality, and we can work on our inner ability to face pressure.

Stress in itself is not harmful. In fact, without a certain amount of stress, we wouldn't be able to meet new challenges. But this physiological reaction is not always helpful, and can be excessively long or intense, even weakening or blocking our mental, emotional and physical resources until we reach exhaustion.

To avoid reaching this point, it's important to be able to remain stable and focused, even in turbulent times.

The following seven strategies can help to tackle stress:

1 Focus on the moment. Forget about multitasking. Shifting one's attention from one thing to another has a high cost in terms of stress, time, accuracy and productivity. Focusing attention on a single task makes

it much easier to accomplish successfully. Eliminate digital interruptions: turn off your cell phone and email notifications if they're not strictly necessary for the task at hand.

2 Learn to say "no." Say "no" to impossible deadlines that you won't be able to meet and to employees and colleagues who return work that you've delegated to them. Refuse to favor the urgent over the important. Set, respect and defend your priorities.

3 Know yourself and your own limits. We're all human and we all make mistakes. No one is perfect and no one is good at everything. We all get tired. Identify the first signs of stress when they appear and take measures. Ask for help when you need it.

4 Accept reality. Realize that there are situations that you can't change and problems whose solution doesn't depend on you.

5 Question your own negativity. Keep perspective on the relative importance and consequences of your mistakes and the expectations that you think others have of you and your results.

6 Observe healthy lifestyle habits. Get enough sleep, exercise, and eat well. Adopt habits that ensure your physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing. Look for moments to replenish your energy throughout the day. Find out about techniques for relaxing and switching off.

7 Connect with others. We all need contact with other people. Talking and laughing with friends and family helps reduce stress.