

Solutions that will help

In a more western context, a book titled, "Is It Worth Dying For?" by Robert S. Eliot and Dennis L. Breo (1984, Bantam Books, Inc.) lists several ways one can cope with stress:

1. Clarify your values. It's important to run not on the fast track, but on your track. Pretend you have only six months to live. Make three lists: the things you have to do, want to do, and neither have to do nor want to do. Then, for the

rest of your life, forget everything in the third category.

2. Improve your "self talks." We all talk to ourselves, and many of our self-talks are needlessly negative. Discipline yourself not to overreact emotionally. Why despair when sadness is sufficient? Why be enraged when simple irritation will get your message across? (*author's note: Be careful to not talk to yourself in front of other people. You may find yourself the only one talking to you. --RCCIII)

3. Learn how to relax. All you need is a quiet room. Get comfortable. Then close your eyes, breathe rhythmically (preferably from your abdomen) and blot out distraction for 10 to 15 minutes. Do this twice a day.

4. Exercise regularly. Try to exercise at least three times a week for 20 minutes at 75 percent of your maximum predicted heart rate. To determine that rate, subtract your age from 225 (if you're 21*, for example, the rate is 204; 75 percent of that, 153, would be age 21's exercise rate). Make sure your doctor approves, and start gradually.

5. Get the leisure you need. The best way to avoid burnout is to allow yourself proper leisure to renew your commitment to work and recharge your batteries. If you're a workaholic, consider: you owe it to yourself to take time off or else you jeopardize your chances of keeping on top of a rough job over the long haul.

6. Adopt dietary goals. Maintain normal weight. Limit fat to no more than 30 percent of your calories; substitute cereals and breads for fats and sugars; moderate salt intake. Also, remember to eat a real breakfast. (*author's note: Don't use excess food points to gorge yourself at the Wintergreen, help feed Erie's homeless, but beware of civil suits.--RCCIII)

7. Avoid "chemical haze." One definition of stress is loss of control; the need to acquire control through artificial means accounts for the popularity of nicotine, alcohol, caffeine and drugs. My advice:

****Smoking-Don't?** Stopping is the single best thing to do for your health.

****Drinking-Only** in moderation. No more than two drinks a day-preferably wine or beer with your meals.

****Coffee-Too** much can make you jittery, irritable, prone to headaches.

****Drugs-Only** if prescribed. Chemicals make you feel you're in control; but you're not. Real control takes effort, not escape.

(*author's note: Speaking of chemicals, limit trips to Coney Island to once a month and drink only the ice water. Another hint, for your own sake don't eat the pie; who knows how long they have been sitting there.--RCCIII)

Okay, so on a general basis most people know what to do to relieve stress. But that's like telling someone to hit a baseball and without giving them a bat.

There are many exercises, both physical and mental, that one can perform to overcome the vast burden of...*stress*.

A hand-out from Sue Daley's office (she's the campus psychologist), lists several tips that one can use to strip stress from one's life:

* If you feel yourself getting tense, relax your muscles and take a few deep, slow breaths.

* Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning. This will give you more time to cope with inevitable morning mishaps.

* Before you go to bed, get a head start on the morning. Get any books and papers together you will need for the next day.

* Plan ahead. Don't wait until you're down to the very last stamp or gallon of gasoline to buy more or fill up.

* Improve your appearance. You feel better if you look better.

* Do only one thing at a time. Don't even think about your next project until you have finished the task you're working on.

* Do unpleasant chores early in the day to get them off your mind.

* Be flexible. Some things aren't worth doing perfectly, and you can compromise on others.

* Every day, do something you really enjoy.

* Make some quiet time for yourself every day to relax and gather your thoughts.

* Learn how to say no -- to extra projects and social activities that you don't have time for or really don't care about.

* Don't get uptight when you're waiting in line. It's a part of life, so just grin and bear it. If you know that you're going to have to wait, bring a magazine or puzzle to help you pass your time.

* Don't depend on your memory. Write down appointment times and chores that you need to take care of.

* Organize your living space and work area. It will eliminate the stress of losing things.

* Wear earplugs when the noise around you gets too loud.

* Take a hot shower -- or a cool one in the summer -- to relieve tension.

* Get enough sleep. Lack of it will make you anxious and irritable.

* Make friends with non-worriers. Chronic worrywarts will get you into the habit of worrying.

* Don't put up with gadgets that don't work. Get them fixed as soon as they break or get new ones.

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No one can get through finals week without any stress at all. That's not rational; but if one tries, one will have better results than if one does not.

I'm getting less stressed because I don't even have to conclude this article, Sue Daley did it for me:

"In a nut-shell, the key to managing your stress is to first own it and secondly DO something differently with it. Remember that long journey that begins with a single step? How about taking small steps today toward smelling the flowers and keeping it simple?"

by R. Carl Campbell II
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