



## 12 Ways to Reduce Stress at Work

### 1. Act Rather Than React

- When situations seem “out of our control” we experience stress
- If chronic, the stress hormone wears down our confidence, concentration, and wellbeing
- Identify aspects of the situation you *can control*
- Focus on your responses and actions

### 2. Take a Deep Breath

- Activate your “relaxation response”
- A few minutes of deep breathing will restore balance when feeling tense or overwhelmed
  - One way – inhale for five seconds, hold and exhale in equal counts

### 3. Reduce Interruptions

- Interruptions bombard us throughout the day
- Unpredictability makes control difficult
- You can learn to adjust your response
  - Accept the interruption
  - Cut it off – “time out” for later
  - Analyze the importance and take action accordingly
  - Plan for recurring interruptions

### 4. Make Energy a Daily Focus

- Continuous “push, push, push” throughout the day is an energy drain
- Productivity goes down, stress levels go up, little “reserves” are left for later
- Recommend stretching, doing breathing exercises, scheduling walking breaks
- Balance concentration with rejuvenation

### 5. Eat Healthy, Sleep Healthy

- Eat low sugar, high protein when possible
- See suggestions: [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)
- Sufficient sleep is critical for recovery from daily stress
- Breathing exercises help calm the body to balance racing thoughts

### 6. Change Your Story

- Check your perception of a stressful event
- Your view is a subjective interpretation of facts seen through your own filter
- Step back – take a more objective view and less personally
- Search for collaborative solutions



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### 7. Shift Gears: Cool Down Quickly

- Feeling frustrated or angry can cause a rise in body heat triggering one to react hastily
- Pause. Try a calming breathing technique to cool down so you can “choose to act”
- These precious seconds are powerful tools to minimize the impact of a stressful situation

### 8. Question Self-Imposed Stress

- We put more stress on ourselves by worrying about what other people think, approval seeking, and procrastinating
- Control what you can – your performance, not another’s perception
- Shift the focus to you and be confident in your ability to get the job done

### 9. Adjust Your Priorities

- Constant change and competing deadlines make prioritizing essential
- It’s critical to define what’s truly important and why
- Identify your goals and strengths
- Align your to-do list with those projects that have the most impact

### 10. Reset Your Panic Button

- The opposite of anxiety is calm
- Practice ways to elicit “the relaxation response” when you are tense or anxious
- Breath work, knowing acupressure points
- Commitment to meditation, yoga, etc. over time will yield long-lasting (calming) results

### 11. Connect with Others

- Influence others in a positive way
- You are responsible for your behavior and outlook
- When other people’s behavior is stressful, use listening skills to deescalate the situation
- Collaborate and talk through solutions, instead of dissecting the problem

### 12. Turn Your Inner Critic into a Cheerleader

- Our thoughts stream continuously
- Internal negativity inflates stress levels as much or more than external events
- Encouraging thoughts help motivate yourself and inspire others
- Be kind and positive to yourself and you will succeed

*Adapted from “Success Under Stress” by Sharon Melnick, Ph.D.*