

Stress Management

How to reduce, prevent, and cope with stress

Stress management strategy #3:

Adapt to the stressor

If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

- **Reframe problems-** Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Rather than fuming a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to pause and regroup, listen to your favorite radio station, or enjoy some alone time.
- **Look at the big picture-** Take perspective of the stressful situation. Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.
- **Adjust your standards-** Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others, and learn to be okay with "good enough".
- **Focus on the positive-** When stress is getting you down; take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life. This simple strategy can help you keep things in perspective.

Take a Deep Breath and Count to Ten

Taking a deep breath or two adds oxygen to your system, which almost instantly helps you relax. In addition, taking a moment to step back can help you maintain your composure, which in the long run, is what you need to work rationally through a stressful situation. Also keep in mind...

- Count to ten (or more or less as the situation warrants!)
- Stand up and stretch. Remember relaxation is the opposite of stress.
- Stand up and smile. Try it! You'll feel better.
- Take a short walk. If you're at work, take a bathroom break or get a glass of water. Do something that changes your focus. When you come back to the problem, chances are it won't seem nearly as insurmountable.

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"Believe you can and you're halfway there."

-Theodore Roosevelt