



The Psychological Services Group

Dedicated Service to Those Who Serve

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR STRESS

While we may not be able to change the events that breed stress in our lives, we **can** change the way we feel about them, how we think about them, and how we handle them, ultimately reducing and even preventing stress. **You can:**

GET ORGANIZED

When we are stressed our concentration and short-term memory already function like a freeway with gridlock traffic. Having to remember where something is, when you're supposed to do it, or what somebody said taxes your already stress-impaired memory unnecessarily. So, plan it, schedule it, file it, take notes on it, and **write it down**. Save your memory for a more creative endeavor.

TAKE BREAKS

To maintain peak performance, you should take a 10-minute break after every 50 minutes of work. **Don't mistake working hard for working well**, which runs the risk of working past the point of diminishing returns. When you're fatigued your effectiveness quickly declines. So, get up, move around, try a different task, and come back refreshed.

REHEARSE

When you're facing a situation that you know will be stressful for you, rehearse it. Visualize yourself prepared and ready to prevail. Practice with a friend, anticipate what may happen, and brainstorm your effective responses. **Being prepared reduces the stress of any encounter.**

DO IT NOW

Do your most challenging or hated task at the top of your day when you are at your most creative and energized in order to avoid the stress of dreading it all day. **Procrastination breeds stress.**

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Be realistic about what you can accomplish in any given time period. **LIMITS** While it is true that many accomplished people carry heavy schedules, it is not true that you can do everything well when your schedule is packed. It's better to establish realistic goals and **to do less really well, than to do more, poorly.**

CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE

Manage stress by consciously changing how you look at things. Multiple studies demonstrate the stress-inoculating benefits of a more optimistic appraisal. Train yourself to **view demands as a challenge to your creative thinking, rather than an insoluble problem.**

LEARN TO SAY "NO"

Say "no" when it doesn't make sense to say "yes." Say "no" when your schedule is full. Say "no" to activities that you don't enjoy, to responsibilities that aren't really yours, to emotional demands that leaving you feeling drained, and to other people's issues that aren't yours to solve. **Recognize that "yes" means nothing if you can't say "no."**

SCHEDULE YOUR STRESS

Scheduling predictably stressful activities can **reduce the number of balls you have in the air** at any one moment. Don't schedule your in-laws visit for the same week you have a career-making presentation or responsibility at work.

TREAT YOUR BODY RIGHT

Everybody knows it, but we all need to be reminded that we have more energy, self-confidence, and will be less susceptible to the unpleasant effects of stress when we **eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly.**

POSITIVE SELF-TALK

We are only too willing to freak ourselves out with the millions of self-inflicted reasons why we can't cope with something. Commit instead to use positive self-reinforcement: **"I can handle this one step at a time."**

TAKE CHARGE

Take responsibility for making your life what you want it to be. It is less stressful to make decisions and take action than to feel powerless and reactive. **Decide what you want and go for it.**