

## 10 Practical Ways to Handle Stress by Margarita Tartakovsky M.S. Associate Editor

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For the full article - <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2011/07/11/10-practical-ways-to-handle-stress/>

Stress is a part of all of our lives. It can easily paralyze us unless we do something about it. Here are 10 suggestions for handling stress.

1. **Figure out where the stress is coming from** – It is easy to feel overwhelmed; feeling like stress is coming at you from all angles. It is important to identify exactly what you are actually stressed about - is it a project, upcoming assignment, big exam? By getting specific, you are one step closer to tackling the stress in your life.
2. **Consider what you can control, and work on that** – There are many things in life that we cannot control. Identify what you have control over and determine an action plan, breaking it down into manageable steps and deadlines.
3. **Do what you love** – It is much easier to deal with stress when the rest of your life is filled with activities you love to do. Find things that reignite your passion for life, activities that bring you peace and happiness.
4. **Manage your time well** – As your to-do list expands, it is easy to get overwhelmed and feel like you do not have enough time. Make a reasonable weekly schedule of things you need to get accomplished. Make sure you schedule in enough sleep time as well as activities you enjoy. Keep checking the schedule to make sure you are on track and you can check completed items off. This can help take that stressful feeling away with a great sense of accomplishment!
5. **Create a toolbox of techniques** – One stress reduction strategy will not necessarily work for all situations. It is important to have a variety of techniques available to you to tackle a variety of stressors. Some examples may be listening to music, deep breathing, exercise, laughter, getting enough sleep, doing a favorite hobby, talking to family and friends, etc.
6. **Remove negotiables from your plate** - Review your daily and weekly activities to determine what you can remove from your plate of tasks. Ask yourself if you are doing too much and decide what really needs to be done.
7. **Are you leaving yourself extra vulnerable to stress?** - If you are not getting enough sleep, physical activity or eating properly, you may be leaving yourself extra susceptible to stress. When your health is ignored, even the smallest stressor can be a tipping point.
8. **Preserve good boundaries** – Are you afraid to say no? Happy, productive people are protective of their time and set clear boundaries for people around them. It is okay to say no to protect your time.
9. **Realize there's a difference between worrying and caring** – If we can shift our mindset from worrying to caring, we can remove more stressors from our life. Worrying indicates that we are moving the worries around in our mind, whereas caring about something can indicate an action. For example: Worrying about your *health* involves... Caring about your *health* involves...
10. **Embrace mistakes—or at least don't drown in perfectionism** – We are all human and nothing good can come from trying to be perfect. This only leads to exhaustion, anxiety and unnecessary pressure. Striving to be the best person/student/son/daughter we can be is all anyone can ask of us. We will make mistakes and from these mistakes this is an opportunity to grow and learn, thus improving ourselves.