

*No matter
what they say...*



*A Stress Management Workshop
For Those In Denial*

Participant Workbook

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STRESS

Definition - _____ which the _____ makes to any _____ in the environment.

Stage 1 - Mild Stress

- Great _____
- _____ perception
- Positive charge



Stage 2 - _____ low

- Less able to _____
- _____
- Tenseness present
- _____ disturbance



Stage 3 - Inability to _____ appropriately

- Irritability, anxiety
- Feelings of _____
- Inability to _____
- Nameless _____



Stage 4 - Terrifying responses caused by adrenaline reactions

- Uncontrollable trembling and _____
- Pounding _____
- Sweating
- Sheer exhaustion



Burnout - Collapse of the human spirit

- Emotional exhaustion
- Personal devaluation
- Disillusionment and _____
- Ineffectiveness

TOP 25 SIGNS OF STRESS OVERLOAD

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____ Disturbances

5. Weight _____

6. _____ Problems

7. _____ Irregularities

8. Psychological _____

9. Increased _____ Abuse

10. _____ in the Head, Neck or Back

11. Dryness of the Throat and _____

12. Inability to _____

13. _____ Prone

14. "Floating _____"

15. Trembling, Nervous _____

16. Tendency to Be Easily Startled By Small _____

17. _____



18. The Frequent Need to _____

19. _____

20. _____

21. _____

22. Increased _____

23. Stuttering and Other _____ Issues

24. High-Pitched, Nervous _____

25. _____ Menstrual Cycles



If you frequently experience any of these symptoms, you may be reacting poorly to stress. Learning how to cope more effectively can help you avoid serious damage to your health.



TOP 14 CAUSES of STRESS

1. Sudden Change
2. Thwarted Ambition
3. Over-promotion
4. Personality Clash
5. Declining Ability
6. Ambiguity
7. Biochemistry
8. Implementing Policy Against Values
9. “Busyness”
10. Uncompleted Tasks
11. Financial Overextension
12. Conviction
13. Conflict of Work and Home Life
14. Fear of Being “Not Needed”

Warning Signs

In the spaces below, list what you believe may be your **Warning Signs** (symptoms) that stress may be getting to unhealthy levels in your life:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____



Cause

In the space below, list what you believe may be the **Cause** of your stress:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



LIFE CHANGE INVENTORY

How's Your Stress Score?

Some stress is necessary for life, but too much stress is harmful. Drs. Thomas H. Holmes and Richard H. Rahe developed at the University of Washington Medical School a scale for measuring stress in terms of 43 "life events."

To find your score, check the events applying to you during the past 12 months. Then add up the total values.

Rank	Event	Value	Your Score
1	Death of spouse	100	
2	Divorce	73	
3	Marital Separation	65	
4	Jail term	63	
5	Death of a close family member	63	
6	Personal injury or illness	53	
7	Marriage	50	
8	Fired from work	47	
9	Marital reconciliation	45	
10	Retirement	45	
11	Change in family members health	44	
12	Pregnancy	40	
13	Sex difficulties	39	
14	Addition to family	39	
15	Work reorganization	39	
16	Change in financial status	38	
17	Death of a close friend	37	
18	Change to a different line of work	36	
19	Change in number of marital arguments	35	
20	Mortgage or loan over \$100,000	31	
21	Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30	
22	Change in work responsibilities	29	
23	Son or daughter leaving home	29	
24	Trouble with in-laws	29	

Rank	Event	Value	Your Score
25	Outstanding personal achievement	28	
26	Spouse begins or stops work	26	
27	Starting or finishing school	26	
28	Change in living conditions	25	
29	Revision of personal habits	24	
30	Trouble with boss	23	
31	Change in work hours, conditions	20	
32	Change in residence	20	
33	Change in schools	20	
34	Change in recreational habits	19	
35	Change in church activities	19	
36	Change in social activities	18	
37	Mortgage or loan under \$100,000	17	
38	Change in sleeping habits	16	
39	Change in number of family gatherings	15	
40	Change in eating habits	15	
41	Vacation	13	
42	Christmas season	12	
43	Minor violation of the law	11	
	TOTAL		

*Adapted from:
Holmes –Rahe Social Readjustment Rating Scale
Journal of Psychosomatic Research*

SELF DESCRIPTION

To what extent does each statement below fit you? (circle only one)

	VERY TRUE	QUITE TRUE	SOME- WHAT TRUE	NOT VERY TRUE	NOT TRUE
1. I spend practically all my time thinking about my work.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I often disagree with my coworkers and boss.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I'm interested in a lot of different things.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I can usually overcome barriers to my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I work mostly to survive, not because I like it.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I often take on more than I can do in my job.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I "roll with the punches" when problems arise.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I treat others as individuals and care about their feelings and opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I often have difficulty getting a lot done on the job.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I know and accept my limitations and strengths.	1	2	3	4	5
11. It's easy for me to get bored.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I become upset when things aren't going my way.	5	4	3	2	1

	VERY TRUE	QUITE TRUE	SOME- WHAT TRUE	NOT VERY TRUE	NOT TRUE
13. I like meeting and talking with others who think differently about the world.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I don't know where I stand on controversial subjects.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I like using my skills and talents on and off the job.	1	2	3	4	5
16. There are a lot of people I could describe as good friends.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I get into arguments quite often with others who don't think like me.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I think I have a realistic picture of my personal strengths and weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I like to work with people like myself.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I'm usually actively involved in projects or recreation on weekends.	1	2	3	4	5

SCORING:

Add together the numbers you circled according to the following scales:

SCALE I	Questions	6, 10, 14,	18 = Total	_____
SCALE II	“	1, 3, 11,	16 = “	_____
SCALE III	“	4, 7, 12,	19 = “	_____
SCALE IV	“	2, 8, 13,	17 = “	_____
SCALE V	“	5, 9, 15,	20 = “	_____

Now add up all total scores for: _____

SELF EVALUATION

Assign a value from 1 to 7 for each question on your behavior. Then add all the values and put the total on the following page.

BEHAVIOR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	BEHAVIOR
1. Don't mind leaving things temporarily unfinished	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Must get things finished once started
2. Calm and unhurried about appointments	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Never late for appointments
3. Not competitive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Highly competitive
4. Listen well, let others finish speaking	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Anticipate others in conversation (nods, interrupts, finishes sentences for others)
5. Never in a hurry, even when pressured	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Always in a hurry
6. Able to wait calmly	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Uneasy when waiting
7. Laid back	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Always going full speed ahead
8. Take one thing at a time	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Try to do more than one thing at a time, think about what to do next
9. Slow and deliberate in speech	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Vigorous and forceful in speech (lots of gestures)
10. Concerned with satisfying self, not others	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Want recognition by others for a job well done
11. Slow doing things	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Fast doing things; eating, walking, etc.
12. Easygoing	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Hard driving
13. Express feelings openly	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Hold feelings in

<u>BEHAVIOR</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<u>BEHAVIOR</u>
14. Have a large number of interests	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Few interests outside work
15. Satisfied with job	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Ambitious, wants quick advancement on job
16. Never set own deadlines	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Often sets own deadlines
17. Feel limited responsibility	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Always feel responsible
18. Never judge things in terms of numbers	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Often judge performance in terms of numbers (how many, how much)
19. Casual about work	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Take work very seriously (works weekends, brings work home, etc.)
20. Not very precise	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Very precise (careful about details)

TOTAL SCORE: _____

WORK STRESSORS INVENTORY

Listed below are different kinds of problems that may arise at work. Indicate if and to what extent you find each of them to be a problem, concern, or obstacle in carrying out your job.

THIS IS A PROBLEM...	NEVER	SELDOM	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALWAYS
CONFLICT					
1. Not knowing what people you work with expect of you	1	2	3	4	5
2. Feeling that you have to do things which are against your better judgement	1	2	3	4	5
3. Thinking you won't be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of various people over you	1	2	3	4	5
JOB STRESS					
4. Feeling you have too heavy a workload	1	2	3	4	5
5. Not having the time to do the work properly	1	2	3	4	5
6. Job requirements impact your personal life	1	2	3	4	5
JOB SCOPE					
7. Being unclear on what job scope and responsibilities are	1	2	3	4	5
8. Feeling you don't have authority to carry out your job	1	2	3	4	5
9. Can't get the information you need to do your job	1	2	3	4	5

THIS IS A PROBLEM...	NEVER	SELDOM	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALWAYS
RELATIONS WITH MANAGEMENT					
1. Not knowing what your manager or supervisor thinks of you	1	2	3	4	5
2. Can't predict the reactions of people above you	1	2	3	4	5
3. Having ideas very different from those above you	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring directions:

Add the three numbers you circled in each of the four areas and enter them here:

Conflict _____
 Job Stress _____
 Job Scope _____
 Relations with Management _____

Then add the four areas together for overall total score... _____

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR LIFE EXPECTANCY

If you are between twenty and sixty-five and reasonably healthy, this test provides a life-insurance-company's-eye view of the future.

1. Start with 72.
2. Gender:
 - a. If you are male, subtract 3.
 - b. If you are female, add 4. (that's right, there is a seven-year spread between the sexes.)
3. Life Style:
 - a. If you live in an urban area with a population over two million, subtract 2.
If you live in a town under ten thousand, or on a farm, add 2.
(City life means population, tension.)
 - b. If you work behind a desk, subtract 3.
 - c. If you exercise strenuously (tennis, running, swimming) five times a week for at least an half hour, add 4. Two or three times a week, add 2.
 - d. If you live with a spouse or friend, add 5. If not, subtract 1 for every ten years alone since age 25. (People together eat better, take care of each other, become less depressed.)
4. Psyche:
 - a. Sleep more than ten hours each night? Subtract 4.
(Excessive sleep is a sign of depression, circulatory disease.)
 - b. Are you intense, aggressive, easily angered? Subtract 3.
Are you easygoing, relaxed, a follower? Add 3.
 - c. Are you happy? Add 1.
Are you unhappy? Subtract 2.
 - d. Have you had a speeding ticket in the last year? Subtract 1.
(Accidents are the fourth-largest cause of death; first in young adults.)
5. Success:
 - a. Earn over \$90,000 a year? Subtract 2.
(Wealth breeds high living, tension.)
 - b. If you finished college, add 1. If you have a graduate or professional degree, add 2 more.
 - c. If you are sixty-five or over and still working, add 3. (Retirement kills.)

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR LIFE EXPECTANCY-CONT'D

6. Heredity:

- a. If any grandparent lived to eighty-five, add 2.
If all four grandparents live to eighty, add 6.
- b. If either parent died of a stroke or heart attack before the age of fifty, subtract 4.
- c. If any parent, brother, or sister under fifty has (or had) cancer or a heart condition, or has had diabetes since childhood, subtract 3.

7. Health:

- a. Smoke more than two packs a day? Subtract 8. One to two packs? Subtract 6. One-half pack? Subtract 3.
- b. Drink the equivalent of a one-fifth a bottle of liquor a day? Subtract 1.
- c. Overweight by fifty pounds or more? Subtract 8. Thirty to fifty pounds? Subtract 4. Ten to thirty pounds? Subtract 2.
- d. Men over forty, if you have annual checkups, add 2.
Women, if you see a gynecologist once a year, add 2.

8. Age Adjustment:

- a. Between thirty and forty? Add 2.
- b. Between forty and fifty? Add 3.
- c. Between fifty and seventy? Add 4.
- d. Over seventy? Add 5.

It's no fun playing the game unless you know how well you've done. The table below tells what percentage of the population you will outlive, providing you make it to the specified age.

Age	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
M	26%	36%	48%	61%	75%	87%	96%	99%	99.9%
F	15%	20%	30%	39%	53%	70%	88%	97%	99.6%

Taken from Carter, Tom. Coping With Stress. Department of Army.

STRESS PROFILE

I. Self Description: (From p. 10-11)

This instrument approximates how well you are coping with your job. The scales refer to specific topic areas. Individual scale scores of 12 or above perhaps suggest it might be good to direct your attention to that area of difficulty. An overall score of 60 or more suggests some general difficulty in coping with the dimensions covered.

Scale I : Knows self	
Scale II : Many interests	
Scale III: Variety of reactions	
Scale IV: Accepts others values	
Scale V : Active and productive	
Total	

II. Self Evaluation: (From p. 12-13)

This instrument looks at personality styles and their relationships or proneness to stress and cardiac illness. On the Self Evaluation your total score was _____ making you a type _____ personality and possibly fitting the following profile:

Total Score = 110-140: **Type A₁** If you are in this category, and especially if you are over 40 and smoke, you are likely to have a high risk of developing cardiac arrest.

Total Score = 80-109: **Type A₂** You are in the direction of being cardiac prone, but your risk is not as high as the A₁. You should, nevertheless, pay careful attention to the advice given to all type A's.

Total Score = 60-79: **Type AB** You are a mixture of A and B patterns. This is a healthier pattern than either A₁ or A₂, but you have the potential for slipping into A behavior and you should recognize this.

Total Score = 30-59: **Type B₂** Your behavior is on the less-cardiac-prone end of the spectrum. You are generally relaxed and cope adequately with stress.

Total Score = 0-29: **Type B₁** You tend to the extreme of non-cardiac traits. Your behavior expresses few of the reactions associated with cardiac disease.

III. Life Change Inventory: (From p. 8-9)

This instrument assesses the life change events you have undergone over the last twelve months and matches them with your likelihood to have an illness in the next two years.

Your score was _____ and fits the scale below:

0 - 149	- slight chance
150 - 199	- 33% chance
200 - 299	- 51% chance
300 - 469	- 66% chance
470+	- 81% chance

IV. Work Stressors Inventory: (From p. 14-15)

This instrument tries to examine what's getting to you at work.

Your scores were:

Conflict	_____
Job Stress	_____
Job Scope	_____
Relations with Management	_____
Overall Score	_____

Scores of 9 or more perhaps suggest that area could be presenting a problem to you that needs attention. An overall score of 36 or more may suggest a more than desirable amount of stress in your job environment.

V. Life Expectancy: (From p. 16-17)

This instrument approximates an insurance company's estimate of how long you will live due to the factors involved which you checked off. According to your present age of _____, your life expectancy is _____. You will outlive _____% of the male population, and _____% of the female population.

COPING WITH STRESS

CURES:

1. Get into somebody else's _____.
2. Use unconventional _____ to accomplish...
3. Keep a _____.
4. _____ more.
5. Escape from your _____.
6. Emphasize _____ work.
7. Discover what you do _____ and do it _____.
8. Read or listen to _____ material.
9. Find _____ and anti-models.
10. _____ projects.
11. _____—keep “short list” of co-worker or family conflicts.
12. _____ (your workplace, closet, kitchen, garage, etc.)
13. _____
14. Sense of _____



RECOGNIZING TENSIONS AND RELEASES

1. What has been the biggest change in the quality of life for you in the past five years?
2. What has been a continuous source of pleasure to you?
3. What has been a continuous source of trouble to you?
4. What has had strong emotional impact on you in the past (both positive and negative)?
5. What changes or additions would you like to have in the near future to improve the quality of your life?
6. What do the above answers tell you about what you need to do in terms of action in the near future?

TWENTY WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS IN YOUR LIFE

1. Refuse to take on other peoples' problems over which you have little or no control (children, employees, bosses, etc.).
2. Provide quiet, alone time for yourself each day.
3. Develop a regular regime of physical activity.
4. Develop a healthy mind and it will help develop a healthy body.
5. Laugh at yourself.
6. Accept yourself. Learn your skills as well as your limitations.
7. Maintain a confidante, someone you can trust with your innermost thoughts.
8. Take constructive action to eliminate the source of stress.
9. Sublimate the source of stress.
10. Transfer the energy produced by a stressor from one area to another.
11. Engage in creative pursuits.
12. Interact with people with whom you do not work.
13. Do meaningful work.
14. Analyze your perceptive skills in viewing stressors.
15. Recognize that the stress is only temporary.
16. Talk nicely to yourself.
17. Reward yourself.
18. Be able to say "no" and feel good about it.
19. Share your feelings openly.
20. Get seven to eight hours of sleep per night.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATING A LESS STRESSED YOU

1. Focus on the “little peaks” in your daily life.
2. Increase your sensory awareness (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling) of all the pleasant stimuli in your environment.
3. Ask a friend for a hug.
4. Redevelop the childhood potential for healthy fantasy.
5. Learn relaxation techniques.
6. Share a massage.
7. Think about the “big peak” (happy) experiences in your life. Tell a friend about one.
8. Sing, run, dance, make love, smile, joke, eat ice cream.
9. Do something special for someone else everyday.
10. Give a gift for no occasion.
11. Say “I love you” more often.
12. Go to the mountains, beach, park, art gallery, aquarium, museum.
13. Stop and smell the roses.
14. Smile at a stranger.
15. Give yourself five nice compliments today.
16. Look at the newborn babies in the hospital nursery.
17. Talk, listen, touch, reach out to another person.
18. Make a list of five good things about today.
19. Hold a sleeping kitten. Play with a frisky puppy.
20. Write a poem.
21. Wear something soft, silky, cuddly.

Adapted from work by Dr. Narecia Hamrick

TWENTY-FIVE RULES OF LOW-STRESS LIVING

1. Make time your ally, not your master.
2. Associate mostly with gentle people who affirm your personhood.
3. Learn and practice the skill of deep relaxation.
4. Use an aerobic exercise such as jogging to build your health to a high level of conditioning.
5. Manage your life as a total enterprise, much as you would manage a corporation.
6. Do not become lopsided in any one area; seek rewarding experiences in all dimensions of living: spiritual, mental, and physical.
7. Engage in meaningful satisfying work.
8. Do not let your work dominate your entire life.
9. Get your body weight down to a level you can be pleased with. Keep it there.
10. Form and keep sensible eating habits. Use sweets rarely, minimize junk foods, emphasize foods you like that are good for you.
11. If you smoke, stop completely, now!
12. Use liquor only for social or ceremonial purposes, if at all; do not let it use you.
13. Eliminate the use of recreational drugs.
14. Free yourself from the chemical tyranny of tranquilizers, sleeping pills, headache pills, and other central nervous system depressants.
15. Free yourself from dependency on patent medicines such as antacids, laxatives and cold remedies by teaching your body to relax and normalize its functions.
16. Have an annual physical examination to provide extra peace of mind (particularly if you are over 40).
17. Jealously guard your personal freedoms; the freedom to choose your friends, the freedom to think and believe as you choose, the freedom to structure your time as you see fit, the freedom to set your own life's goals.

18. Find some time every day — even if only ten minutes — for complete privacy, aloneness with your thoughts and freedom from the pressures of work. Preferably do this for a few minutes several times a day. Maintain “stability zones,” personal rituals and comfortable patterns that insulate you.
19. Do not drift along in troublesome and stressful situations. Rehabilitate a bad marriage. “Fire” those friends from your life who are not really your friends. Take action to settle those matters that are troubling you. Do not leave troubled situations unresolved for so long that they make you worry needlessly.
20. Have one or more pastimes that give you a chance to do something relaxing without having to have something to show for it.
21. Open yourself up to new experiences. Try doing things you have never done before, sample foods you have never eaten, go places you have never been. Find self-renewing opportunities.
22. Read interesting books and articles to freshen your ideas and broaden your points of view. Listen to the ideas and opinions of others in order to learn from them. Avoid “psychosclerosis,” also known as “hardening of the categories.” Reduce or eliminate television watching.
23. Form at least one or two high-quality relationships with people you trust and can be yourself with.
24. Review your “obligations” from time to time and make sure they will bring rewards for you. Divest yourself of those that are not good for you.
25. Surround yourself with cues and affirm positive thoughts and positive approaches to life that remind you to relax and unwind occasionally.

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POSITIVE STRESS CONTROL

We all know stress is a daily part of our lives. Many people don't know that they can defuse or neutralize many of the stressors in their lives. I hope this list will help you in managing stress in your life.

1. Think about relaxing and try to remain relaxed most of the time.
2. Take an honest look at your work and your life from time to time to ensure that you really are being true to yourself as a unique human being.
3. Make sure you have a reasonably specific idea of where you want to go in your life. (What's your life strategy?)
4. Accept that nothing in this world is perfect.
5. Allow time for and enjoy rituals and traditions.
6. Remember a successful life is always unfinished.
7. Give yourself a life space filled with a reasonable amount of regularity — avoid continuing upheaval.
8. Don't waste your time and energy trying to be friendly with people who are basically unreasonable.
9. Learn to appreciate the simple delights of life (ie: a child, a tree, a sunset, the clouds, etc.).
10. Don't dwell on those things that are irrevocably ugly or nasty.
11. Conduct your work in a setting that promotes a sense of personal peace within you.
12. Be jealous of your own sense of space and seek "aloneness" from time to time to maintain and renew your spirits.
13. In the day to day struggles of life try always to look for and concentrate on the positive elements.
14. Get rid of "energetic stupidity syndrome" — that inner urgency that tells you you've always got to be busy and quick about all you do.
15. Use kindness in the words you use when speaking with someone else.

16. Let the way you go about things justify results, not the other way around.
17. When you experience failures, be sure to recall your past successes to keep things in perspective.
18. Wherever and whenever possible, try to anticipate and avoid or counter the stressors.
19. Develop and maintain a sense of humor. Learn to laugh at yourself.
20. If something is bothering you at a fundamental level of your life, don't put off dealing with it. You must "lance the boil." Otherwise it will continue to poison, hurt, and disturb you below the surface.
21. Try to keep calm in the midst of unsettling events, and avoid becoming too personally "inflamed" about them.
22. Remember that the "success formulas" other people pursue won't necessarily work for you.
23. No matter what age you are, always retain a long term perspective about issues and events.
24. Keep in mind that today is really the only tomorrow and yesterday that we have. So it's what we do today that really counts in our lives.
25. Work on acquiring the things in life that are worth being rather than merely acquiring possessions.

Perhaps Carl Jung, understudy of Sigmund Freud and one of the great founders of psychiatric counseling, put his finger on one of the better cures of stress when he said, "During the past thirty years, people from all the civilized countries over Europe have consulted me. I have treated many hundreds of patients. Among all my patients over the age of thirty-five, there was not one of whose problems, in the final analysis, was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say, then that everyone of them fell ill because they lost that which the living religions of every age had given to their followers. And I would say that not one patient in thirty years under my care was ever really healed unless he regained a healthy, religious outlook." ... from "Bits and Pieces."

In this time we are finding that many spiritual and scriptural teachings have biological and psychological significance for us. They can impact our health and well-being.

Weekends - The Antidote to Stress is Structure

Stress has a funny way of sneaking up on you when you least expect it, but how you respond is only half the battle. The secret to winning the war against stress lies in what you do when you aren't working (and presumably aren't stressed).

While I have a hobby that I engage in regularly (surfing), it isn't the antidote to stress you might think. Think about it: even if you have a hobby that you're deeply passionate about, you aren't going to spend more than 10% of your time outside of work doing it. It's what you do with the other 90% that really matters.

You need structure to use this other 90% wisely. Otherwise, you'll fall into bad habits that can magnify your stress, rather than alleviate it. I structure my time by religiously following 10 rules when I'm not working.

These rules work wonders with one limitation: they don't work quite as well if you work too much. Sure, we're all busy, but if you're putting in 80-90 hour weeks, you won't have the energy or focus to use your time outside of work wisely.

And there's no point in working that much. A Stanford study found that productivity per hour declines sharply when the workweek exceeds 50 hours, and productivity drops off so much after 55 hours that there's no point in working any more. That's right, people who work as much as 70 hours (or more) per week actually get the same amount done as people who work 55 hours.

My rules help me to shift gears to relaxing and rejuvenating activities during my time off. Try them and see if they help you to find balance.

Rule #1: Disconnect

Disconnecting is the most important strategy on this list, because if you can't find a way to remove yourself electronically from your work, then you've never really left work.

Making yourself available to your work 24/7 exposes you to a constant barrage of stressors that prevent you from refocusing and recharging. If taking the entire weekend off handling work e-mails and calls isn't realistic, try designating specific times on Saturday and Sunday for checking e-mails and responding to voicemails. For example, check your messages on Saturday afternoon while your kids are getting a haircut and on Sunday evenings after dinner. Scheduling short blocks of time will alleviate stress without sacrificing availability.

Rule #2: Minimize Chores

Chores have the tendency to monopolize your free time. When this happens, you lose the opportunity to relax and reflect. What's worse is that a lot of chores feel like work, and if you spend all weekend doing them, you just put in a seven-day workweek. To keep this from happening, you need to schedule your chores like you would anything else during the week, and if you don't complete them during the allotted time, you move on and finish them the following weekend.

Rule #3: Exercise

No time to exercise during the week? You have 48 hours every weekend to make it happen. Getting your body moving for as little as 10 minutes releases GABA, a soothing neurotransmitter that reduces stress. Exercise is also a great way to come up with new ideas. Innovators and other successful people know that being outdoors often sparks creativity.

I know that a lot of my best ideas come to me while I'm surfing. While you're out in the ocean, the combination of invigorating activity and beautiful scenery creates the perfect environment for an influx of creativity. Whether you're running, cycling, or gardening, exercise leads to endorphin-fueled introspection. The key is to find a physical activity that does this for you and then to make it an important part of your weekly routine.

Rule #4: Pursue a Passion

You might be surprised what happens when you pursue something you're passionate about during your time off. Indulging your passions is a great way to escape stress and to open your mind to new ways of thinking. Things like playing music, reading, writing, painting, or even playing catch with your kids can help stimulate different modes of thought that can reap huge dividends over the coming week.

Rule #5: Spend Quality Time with Family

Spending quality time with your family is essential if you want to recharge and relax. Weekdays are so hectic that the entire week can fly by with little quality family time. Don't let this bleed into your weekends. Take your kids to the park, take your spouse to his or her favorite restaurant, and go visit your parents. You'll be glad you did.

Rule #6: Schedule Micro-Adventures

Buy tickets to a concert or play, or get reservations for that cool new hotel that just opened downtown. Instead of running on a treadmill, plan a hike. Try something you haven't done before or perhaps something you haven't done in a long time. Studies show that anticipating something good to come is a significant part of what makes the activity pleasurable. Knowing that you have something interesting planned for Saturday will not only be fun come Saturday, but it will significantly improve your mood throughout the week.

Rule #7: Wake Up at the Same Time

It's tempting to sleep in on the weekend to catch up on your sleep. Though it feels good temporarily, having an inconsistent wake-up time disturbs your circadian rhythm (and can aggravate depression). Your body cycles through an elaborate series of sleep phases in order for you to wake up rested and refreshed. One of these phases involves preparing your mind to be awake and alert, which is why people often wake up just before their alarm clock goes off (the brain is trained and ready). When you sleep past your regular wake-up time on the weekend, you end up feeling groggy and tired. This isn't just disruptive to your day off, it also makes you less productive on Monday because your brain isn't ready to wake up at your regular time. If you need to catch up on sleep, just go to bed earlier.

Rule #8: Reflect

Weekly reflection is a powerful tool for improvement. Use the weekend to contemplate the larger forces that are shaping your industry, your organization, and your job. Without the distractions of Monday to Friday busy work, you should be able to see things in a whole new light. Use this insight to alter your approach to the coming week, improving the efficiency and efficacy of your work.

Rule #9: Designate Mornings as Me Time

It can be difficult to get time to yourself on the weekends, especially if you have family. Finding a way to engage in an activity you're passionate about first thing in the morning can pay massive dividends in happiness and cleanliness of mind. It's also a great way to perfect your circadian rhythm by forcing yourself to wake up at the same time you do on weekdays. Your mind achieves peak performance two-to-four hours after you wake up, so get up early to do something physical, and then sit down and engage in something mental while your mind is at its peak.

Rule #10: Prepare for the Upcoming Week

The weekend is a great time to spend a few moments planning your upcoming week. As little as 30 minutes of planning can yield significant gains in productivity and reduced stress. The week feels a lot more manageable when you go into it with a plan because all you have to focus on is execution.

*By Dr. Travis Bradberry
Coauthor Emotional Intelligence 2.0 & President at TalentSmart
The Antidote to Stress is Structure
Feb 10, 2016*

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

1. Complete Natural Breathing

Here are some techniques to help your stress level throughout the day. If you find yourself at your job, or at home, and beginning to feel anxiety and stress start to build up, take a few minutes to try the following techniques.

If you've ever watched a dog or baby breathe while they were asleep, you've seen this natural manner of breathing. Civilized man, with his penchant for tight clothing, a sedentary and stressful lifestyle, and poor posture has tended to move away from this form of breathing. The following exercises will become almost automatic.

1. **Begin by sitting or standing up straight, in good posture.**
2. **Breathe through your nose.**
3. **As you inhale, *first* fill the lower section of your lungs. Your diaphragm will push your abdomen outward to make room for the air. *Second*, fill the middle part of your lungs as your lower ribs and chest move forward slightly to accommodate the air. *Third*, fill the upper part of your lungs as you raise your chest slightly and draw in your abdomen a little to support your lungs. These three steps can be performed in one smooth, continuous inhalation, which with practice, can be completed in a couple of seconds.**
4. **Hold your breathe for a few seconds.**
5. **As you exhale slowly, pull your abdomen in slightly and lift it up slowly as the lungs empty. When you have completely exhaled, relax your abdomen and chest.**
6. **Sometimes (at the end of the inhalation phase), raise your shoulders and collarbone slightly so that the very top of your lungs are sure to be replenished with the fresh air.**

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

2. Deep Muscle Relaxation

The following is a procedure for achieving, deep muscle relaxation quickly. Whole muscle groups are simultaneously tensed and then relaxed. Repeat each procedure at least once, tensing each muscle group from five to seven seconds and then relaxing from 20 to 30 seconds. Remember to notice the contrast between the sensations of tension and relaxation.

1. **Curl both fists, tightening biceps and forearms. Relax.**
2. **Wrinkle up your forehead. At the same time, press your head as far back as possible, roll it clockwise in complete circle, reverse. Now wrinkle the muscles of your face: frowning, eyes squinted, lips pursed, tongue pressing the roof of your mouth, and shoulders hunched. Relax.**
3. **Arch back as you take a deep breath into the chest. Hold. Relax. Take a deep breath, pressing out the stomach. Hold. Relax.**
4. **Pull your feet and toes back toward your face, tightening your shins. Hold. Relax.**
5. **Curl your toes, simultaneously tightening your calves, thighs and buttocks. Relax.**

SAMPLE STRESS MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

IDENTIFY STRESSOR	CAUSE OF STRESSOR	EFFECTS OF STRESSOR	MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED
-Too much workload	-Not enough staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Long hours -Many mistakes -Smoking heavily -Too many cocktails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learn to take a relaxation break twice a day -Breathing exercises: 10:30 a.m. 2:30 p.m. -Walk (15 min.) on company grounds (during lunch)
-Hassled by spouse	-I'm not at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Arguments -Strained love 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discuss with spouse -Mutual agreement on time I should be home -Cut less important commitments

SAMPLE STRESS MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN (cont'd)

IDENTIFY STRESSOR	CAUSE OF STRESSOR	EFFECTS OF STRESSOR	MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED



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