

How to stress yourself out

Getting stressed is pretty easy really. Most of us can manage it all by ourselves without any outside assistance. Just in case you need help in increasing your stress levels here are a few sure-fire tactics you can use.

Sleep less

Not getting enough zzzs will make you cranky and wired. You need at least eight hours of sleep to function well. At times of pressure you may even need more. Sleep resets our hormone levels and protects us against stress and depression.

Drink energy drinks

Just one of these drinks elevates your levels of adrenaline (a stress hormone) to five times the normal level for five hours after drinking. These drinks are often high in caffeine, aspartame and sugars all of which increase your stress levels. Add to that eating a lot of junk food that is full of carbohydrates and you'll have a brain that is not only stressed out, it will also feel sludgy and tired.

Be inactive

Sitting around doing nothing can be great but if you are already a bit stressed, it will help the worries to build and circle like vultures.

Isolate yourself

You're a big powerful person right? You don't need help from anyone else. Pretend that:

- no one else on earth has ever felt this way and they have no useful ideas that could help you in any way; and
- even if you did ask them they wouldn't care enough about you to help.

When you are really stressed you can't think straight so to rely on yourself alone to sort things out is one of the best ways to make sure your worries continue.

Thinking about the outcome not the process

Focusing and worrying about final exams, upcoming performances or future social situations will not only increase your stress it will fill you with dread as well.

Work Harder

The logic here is that if working harder got you into this state, it is going to take even more hard work to get you out of it. Especially crazy, but if it's feeling stressed that you want, this is a good way of getting it.

Escape into computer games

Playing computer games can be a good distraction. Play them for a long time and you will end up feeling wired and listless.

Talk about being busy

We can talk ourselves into being stressed. Telling everyone how busy and tired you are becomes a way of increasing your own sense of being wired and exhausted.

Facebook Fretting

Once you are feeling stressed go on Facebook and check other friends' Facebook profiles. Seeing all the fun stuff they've been doing while you've been worry should help you to feel much, much worse.

How to calm yourself down

We can get so used to feeling stressed that it can feel weird to wind down and relax. As soon as we start to chill out we get jumpy and feel worse. If this sounds familiar, it's a sure sign you do need to stress less but know it is going to take a bit of time and few practice runs before you'll notice any changes.

Don't think about the end result, focus on the steps you have to take today to get to that outcome

Lots of anxiety is thinking about how future events will turn out. Will I pass this test? Will they like me? Do I have enough friends? Try to tame your mind so that you stop thinking about questions you can't know the answer to. Instead practice narrowing your attention to what you can do right now.

Exercise

Being physically active lowers our stress levels. Exercise increases blood flow to the smart parts of our brains where problems can get solved. When we sit or lie still for too long the more primitive parts of our brain kicks in and our thoughts go around and around.

Movements where you move rhythmically are especially good for reducing stress. Dancing, surfing, drumming, roller-skating, table tennis, swimming, juggling, down ball, volleyball, boxing and gymnastics are all rhythmic movements.

Write it out

Get your worries out of your head. Write them down on a sheet of paper. Map them out using Inspiration or Kidspiration. Make a note or a voice memo on your phone.

Know that everyone has worries.

All human beings worry at times so don't feel strange or odd or different. Just learn that you can find yourself worrying at times, just like everyone else.

Talk to someone you trust

Now you know everyone gets stressed at times, tell someone you can rely on about feeling worried. Even if they don't have any suggestions for you, just telling someone makes a difference.

Breath deeply

When you feel stressed, take a moment to breathe deeply. Put your hand on your belly and take a big breath. Then slowly breathe out as you count to yourself, "one thousand, two thousand, three thousand". Slowing down your breathing resets your body.

Drink water

Drinking water lowers the level of cortisol (a stress hormone) in your body.

Stop mind juggling start doing

Lots of people when they get stressed freeze up and feel like they can't start anything. Start somewhere. Your first attempt doesn't have to be the perfect answer. Getting started builds momentum and confidence.

Use a mood shift playlist

Music is a powerful way of lessening stress. Make a playlist of your best feel good songs and play when you find the worries are creeping in.