

77 Simple Stress Stranglers

A straight-forward guide for exhausted managers who are too stressed to keep calm



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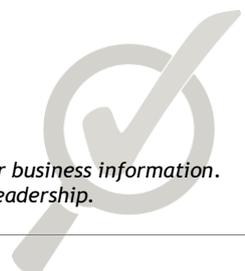
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Stress is part of life

Stress is an unavoidable part of life, but that doesn't mean you can't learn how to effectively deal with it. The average business professional has 30 to 100 projects on their plate. Modern workers are interrupted seven times an hour and distracted up to 2.1 hours a day. And four out of 10 people working at large companies are experiencing a major corporate restructure, and are therefore facing uncertainty about their futures. This may be why more than 40% of adults say they lie awake at night plagued by the stressful events of the day.

"Frustrated and hard-working managers come to me for advice on how to handle stress at work," says Martin Probst, founder and CEO (Chief Education Officer) at PROfound Leadership. "They feel overwhelmed and don't know how to reduce their stress levels to get their work ethic and joy back."

Well, we got busy and put together a list of "stress stranglers" to empower yourself, stress less, get your productivity back and in due course free up some much-needed quality time with family and friends.

77 Simple Stress Stranglers

1. Set your intention for the day EVERY MORNING.
2. Pack your bag and lay out your clothes the night before. Set a stress-free tone for the day.
3. Write a to-do-list for today with only the 3-5 most **important** tasks (everything else off the ongoing to-do-list will be a bonus).
4. Focus on one thing at the time.
5. If you must multi-task, set aside a time frame, for example one hour per day, where you knock off a few things in one big swoop.
6. Write stuff down, so you don't have to worry about forgetting.
7. Keep your workspace and home neat and tidy to reduce stress of trying to find seemingly lost items.
8. "Eat that Frog" - Mark Twain once said that if the first thing you do each morning is to eat a live frog, you can go through the day with the satisfaction of knowing that this is probably the worst thing that is going to happen to you all day long. Your 'frog' is your biggest, most important task, the one you are most likely to procrastinate on if you don't do something about it.
9. If you have a big task at hand that lingers around in the back of your head, identify a small thing you can do today to bring you closer to finishing it.
10. Keep an "irritation list" with things that are bothering or frustrating you. Which things or situations create the most stress and what is the pattern? You can then tackle these stressors and work on making the list smaller over time.
11. Say NO in a nice way. No is a complete sentence; you do not need to explain yourself, you can just say no.
12. Be a few minutes early to whatever you do to avoid stressful situations.
13. Don't create drama where none is necessary. Surely, you have other things to do.
14. Don't compare yourself with others; you don't know what their goals are. Your focus should be on yourself not on others.

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15. Spend 80% of your time focussing on solutions, and 20% at most dwelling on issues and problems.
16. Delegate what you can. Make sure you give the person taking over an appropriate induction or training.
17. Ask instead of guessing to avoid misunderstandings. Leave the mind-reading to others.
18. Act rather than react.
19. Don't worry about what others are thinking or saying - have some confidence in yourself. What other people think of you is none of your business 😊
20. Instead of being harsh and critical of yourself, actively have positive and encouraging thoughts.
21. Check your email inbox only once every hour or two, log out of the program in between.
22. Keep instant messaging programs offline, and turn your smartphone to silent mode for specific times.
23. Only take and return phone calls during dedicated times.
24. Have a closed-door policy - only "open your business" during dedicated times.
25. Keep your workspace simple and decluttered to focus on what truly matters.
26. Get up and stretch every 45 minutes.
27. Take 15 deep breaths every 45 minutes.
28. Learn and practise self-hypnosis.
29. Exercise - even for a minute with a short walk around the block. Get your blood moving to release endorphins.
30. Spark some scents. Aromatherapy can be a good way to relieve stress. Lavender, Bergamot, Cedarwood, Chamomile, Geranium, Jasmine, Orange, Rose, Sandalwood etc. are good and calming choices.
31. Check and handle social media and emails as late in your work day as possible, maybe during the last hour of your day. This way you can use your most energetic hours for doing important task.
32. Spend a few minutes each month to unsubscribe to newsletters, blogs, newsfeed and podcasts that you no longer or rarely listen to - it just creates information overload.
33. Eliminate the useless tasks. Peter Drucker most famously said: "There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all."
34. Find out what the biggest time wasters in your life are. Is it reading emails you should not be getting in the first place? Is it printing reports that somebody else could print for you? Is it grocery shopping every night? Find ways to eliminate or minimise them.
35. When you get angry or frustrated, CHOOSE a different response.
36. If you get involved in a problem, focus on win-win for all parties. One person's success is not achieved by the other person's loss.
37. If you get involved in a problem, become the impartial observer. Do not fall into the categories of aggressor, victim or rescuer.
38. If you are worked up, hit the pause button and use the cooling breath technique (breathe in through your mouth as if you are sipping through a straw, and then breathe out normally through your nose. Done right, you'll feel a cooling, drying sensation over the top of your tongue.)
39. Tackle any unresolved conflicts to avoid stressing about them subconsciously.

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40. Confront poorly performing employees in a respectful manner, and transfer ownership of the bad behaviour to them.
41. Take your time for lunch, and regard it as a time of relaxation.
42. Eat healthily (a good amount of fruit, vegetables and protein), avoid sugary snacks and plan ahead.
43. Swap some of your daily caffeine boosts with green tea.
44. Chew gum to reduce cortisol levels.
45. Set weekday “working hours” which include time at the office and working from home, checking emails etc. These could for example be 8am to 8pm strictly.
46. Disconnect over the weekend. Stay offline, and only check your messages once per day (if you absolutely must).
47. Get a hobby, or time out to do what you love. If you don’t know what that is, it is about time to find out! (A joint study of 314 workers conducted by the University of South Australia and the University of Rotterdam found that employees with higher levels of active leisurely activities, such as exercise, hobbies and social activity, were able not only to bounce back from workplace stress better, but also sleep significantly better than others.)
48. Do an art project, even if you think you are not very gifted. It is a great way to relieve stress.
49. Find something that has meaning to you, and start doing volunteers work in that field.
50. Spend more time in the present moment rather than reliving the past or imagining the future.
51. Tell yourself to just take care of today, and take care of tomorrow when it comes.
52. Go for “good enough” rather than “perfect”. Then move on to the next task or project. Maria Shriver said it nicely: “Perfectionism doesn’t make you feel perfect; it makes you feel inadequate.”
53. Ask for help if it all gets too much - you might be surprised by how helpful and kind people can be if you ask them.
54. Take a 15-minute walk to burn off a rush of stress.
55. Vent your stress with somebody trustworthy and close to you - talking it out can often help to decrease the stress quite a bit.
56. If talking to somebody is not an option, the next best thing is talking calmly to yourself. Assure yourself that everything will be ok.
57. Zoom out of your narrow perspective by asking yourself if there is anyone on the planet having it worse than you right now.
58. Move slower, eat slower, talk slower, walk slower - by slowing down your body, your thoughts become clearer and stress decreases.
59. Influence your mind to have more positive thoughts by changing your language to a positive one. For example, if somebody asks you how you are, replace “not bad” with “pretty good”, or replace “I am confused” with “I need clarification”. Small changes, big impact!
60. Overcome the 6 needs of your ego: to know, judge, justify, be right, look good and get even. Life will be less stressful when your thoughts and actions come from the heart!
61. Don’t let others take advantage of you. Set boundaries with your workload - it should be reasonable over an extended period of time.
62. Spend less money - four of the top 10 stressors we experience are related to how we get and how we spend money.

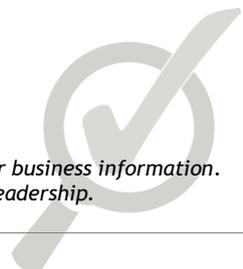
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63. Laugh more - have fun with family or friends, or watch some funny comedies or YouTube clips.
64. If your intentions for the day got interrupted by life, tell yourself in a kind way that tomorrow will be another day.
65. Never check your email right before going to bed or straight after you wake up.
66. Take a moment to celebrate when things go well. Acknowledge yourself and give yourself a pat on the back.
67. Regularly try a new activity. You could for example try a new dish or food, spend an entire day without checking the time, explore places in your neighbourhood that you have never been to.
68. Get regular massages or acupuncture treatments.
69. If you are a hugger, keep doing it. It can reduce blood pressure and stress levels in adults.
70. Enjoy mother nature, and get some sunlight if you can.
71. Practise Yoga, Pilates or Tai Chi (you can do this on your own if you want to, just check the internet for guidance).
72. Listen to soothing music (nature sounds, relaxation songs, classical music, etc.)
73. Spend more time with your pet, if you have one.
74. Get enough sleep (if you wake up during the night and can't get back to sleep; cover your right nostril and breath through your left for 3-5 minutes). Sleeping less, doesn't make you more productive!
75. Spray lavender scent onto your pillowcase before bed - it reduces stress levels.
76. Become clear on your goals in your personal and professional life. This will act like a compass in your day-to-day life. Use the "[Leadership Journal](#)" ISBN: 978-0-9946437-3-5 as a planning and tracking tool.
77. Read "[Master Your Mind](#)" ISBN: 978-0-9946437-1-1 or other self-help books to understand how your mind works. 😊

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About PROfound Leadership

REAPING RESULTS FROM CONFIDENT LEADERSHIP.

PROfound Leadership is a dynamic Melbourne based business that operates throughout Australia and internationally. By delivering SKILLS OF THE FUTURE, we empower managers to become successful leaders who can accomplish tangible achievements with confidence and fulfilment.

Our elite and proven strategies empower self-driven and competent managers to stay in control, so they can positively impact the people around them through their actions and authentic leadership style.

Three key factors make us unique:

- 1.** All our professional development content (including online training courses, in-house workshops, books, videos, webinars, live Q&A sessions, and one-on-one coaching and mentoring sessions) is developed and delivered by our director and Chief Education Officer Martin Probst. We design our training with the learner in mind, cater for a variety of learning preferences, and are not afraid to share all our knowledge.
- 2.** We are famous for instant and profound results. We proudly follow our own PROfound Leadership Methodology, the blueprint for successful and confident leaders. This ground-breaking method is your compass to overcome the toughest challenges in today's busy and ever-changing environment, and has been specifically designed to elevate you to a whole new level of success.
- 3.** We know that one approach won't suit everyone, so it's part of our philosophy to find ways to make our training accessible to as many people as possible. We offer you flexibility by designing and presenting our user-friendly courses online, as well as delivering tailored in-house workshops for your team or organisation. However, we appreciate that applying newly acquired leadership skills and methods can pose a challenge, which is why we also offer one-on-one coaching services to successfully implement your strategies.

Find out about our services and products at www.profoundleadership.com.au



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