

Reset Your Mental State at Work

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It is very important to understand a few things about stress and stress management (especially when it comes to workplace stress). Because stress

management is not just about handling stress when it happens. If you want to keep your stress levels low, no matter the circumstances, then you need to understand what causes your stress so that you can prevent a large portion of it from ever happening.

Often, stress is triggered by events or circumstances that are unexpected, have a tight timeline and/or create pressure to perform. And so, you're expected to feel some level of stress. Think about what tends to trigger stress for you. Yes, something happens that you have little to no control over (and even if you did have control, you can't go back and change the situation you're in).

Your brain is predisposed to think negatively and assume the worst. It is more likely to cause your brain to go into fight-or-flight mode. Fight-or-flight is the automatic stress response triggered within your body when subjected to higher levels of stress. Although this is helpful when subjected to real danger, it's unhelpful in virtually all other situations (especially when at work).

For years, scientists believed that the brain was like a machine: great, but unable to change. That's been proven wrong. Your brain is plastic, able to change based on new experiences (called neural plasticity).

It turns out that new thoughts create new neural pathways and repetition strengthens these pathways. What this means is that, through persistent practice, you can rewire your brain to:

- Process thoughts and emotions around stressful situations in a more helpful manner.
- Decrease negative thoughts (and increase positive thoughts); and
- Create desired habits.



Three Easy-to-Implement Stress Relief Exercises (Even at Work)

1. *Deep Breathing*

Breathe slowly and deeply through your nose while counting each breath. If you lose count and discover that your mind has wandered, bring your focus back to your breathing and start counting from 1 again.

2. *Re-Frame*

Reframing is a technique designed to change how you perceive your stress so that you can stop focusing on the negatives and instead see the positives.

3. *Reset Your Physical and Mental State*

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How to Reset Your Physical & Mental State

Step 1: Get up and MOVE.

Stretch if you want and then go for a walk or go up/down the stairs. You can walk around the office – inside or outside. And if you're feeling really motivated, do a few jumping jacks and/or squats.

As you move, focus on each movement and how it feels in your body. Pay attention to your breathing. And count reps or footsteps. How long you go is up to you, but I recommend at least 3 minutes.

Once done, go back to your office/desk and move on to.

Step 2: Perform a simple breath meditation for 1-3 minutes (at least count to 10).

Step 3: Create a self-affirmation around your abilities to handle the situation and move past it (using the principles discussed above).

Good luck and don't forget to breathe.