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CHANGE

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Let's Talk About Stress

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Welcome to the New Year! If you're like many people, you've already made your New Year's resolutions and you're all set to embark upon a wonderful year. But what if something unexpected and unwanted comes up? What if a storm damages your roof? Or you don't get that promotion? Or a family member falls ill? How do you manage the stress?

There are several methods you can use to help yourself **stay on track and keep your stress in check**. Even though some events are out of your control, how you deal with them makes a huge difference. And for the events that *are* within your control (i.e. stretching yourself too thin at work), there are several preventive methods you can take to



keep stress to a minimum.

Here are some of my favorite stress-busting methods:

1. Take Charge of Your Self-Talk

Things will not always go your way. Your car might breakdown, you might bumble a presentation, or you might find yourself struggling with a project. When life is less than perfect, it is easy to feel sorry for yourself and let the stress erode your confidence and poise. Sometimes that little voice in our heads (which I like to call our “saboteur”) tells us that we’re no good or that we should just give up. **Don’t let yourself be ruled by negative self-talk!**

Next time you catch yourself thinking, “I’m no good” or “why do bad things always happen to me?” or “I’ll never succeed,” STOP. Be aware of your saboteur and talk back to it. **Fill your thoughts with affirmations** such as:

“I can do anything.”

“There’s no obstacle I can’t overcome.”

“I can succeed at whatever I put my mind to.”

“I am a worthwhile person.”

“I am strong, smart, and I will succeed.”

It may not come naturally to you at first to compliment yourself and give your confidence a boost, but the more you practice positive self-talk, the more naturally it will come.

2. Step Away

Sometimes we simply need to gain a little perspective. If you’re having a stressful day—work is piling up on your desk, you have a sick child at home, and one of your clients is continuously calling you with complaints—distance yourself from your situation. Take a step back, either figuratively or literally (actually leaving your workspace for a few minutes) and attempt to look at your stressors as neutrally as possible. Ask yourself, **“What is out of my control and what is in my control?”** Then, ask yourself, “What can I do to make this situation better?”

After you’ve had some time (and distance) to assess your stressful circumstances, begin to formulate an actionable plan of attack. You’ll find that **giving yourself a little breathing room will help clarify your thinking** and make your troubles seem smaller than they previously did.

3. Find Healthy Outlets

When life feels overwhelming, it’s beneficial to have a go-to relaxation technique that works for you. Activities such as riding a bike, yoga,



The Ten-Minute Leadership Challenge: a practical guide for all types of leaders.

[Available on Amazon.](#)

Top 20 Stress-Busters



[Studies show](#) that 40% of adults lie awake at night, plagued by the stressful events of the day. Here are 20 easy ways to [quickly reduce the stress in your life](#).

5 Minutes to Better Personal Branding

reading for pleasure, cooking, or creating artwork are great ways to fend off stress *and* give your body a healthy boost. It is easy to let these healthy activities fall by the wayside, so consider scheduling them into your daily to-do list. My method? I teach a spin class, so it's mandatory that I show up and get active.

Figure out what works for you and stick to it! According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), healthy living is essential for managing stress. Exercise regularly, adopt a healthy diet, and get plenty of sleep in order to perform at your peak.

4. Practice Stress Prevention

According to [Dr. Sharon Melnick](#), author of *Success Under Stress*, **much of the stress we feel in our lives is self-imposed**. With some smart time management and awareness of our limits, we can significantly cut the chances of dealing with future stressors.

One crucial piece of the stress prevention puzzle is knowing when to say no. Many of us are eager to please and end up taking on too many projects and responsibilities when we know we shouldn't. Know your limits! If you feel yourself getting stretched too thin, have the courage and the confidence to say no. If you'd like more advice on how and when to say no, I dedicated [an entire newsletter](#) to the topic last year.

Cutting stress is an essential part of living a healthy, happy life. The methods I described above are great for long-term stress-reduction, but sometimes you need a quick "in the moment" fix. For my [Top 20 Stress-Busting Tips](#), please visit [my blog](#).

You have a brand new year ahead of you; here's to making it as stress-free as possible!

Sincerely,



Margaret Smith

Founder, [UXL: Creating Successful Leaders](#)
Author of [The Ten-Minute Leadership Challenge](#)



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How (and Why) to Make a Mind Map



Have you ever felt lost amid all the things you want to accomplish or all the tasks you need to do? Have you ever felt like your brain was so scattered, you couldn't keep a clear thought in your head or a clear direction.

Sometimes, when I'm feeling that way, I [make a mind map](#).



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About UXL

UXL's mission is to create leaders, promote positive change, and enable businesses and individuals to transform their dreams into reality.

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