



State of Mind & Stress

The 12 Strategies



The 12 Strategies



Time Management



Nutrition



Exercise



Sleep



Leisure



Changing Thinking

The 12 strategies captured on the following pages can help you to manage your stress and your state of mind.



Music



Connecting



Nature



Mind/Body



Pace



Writing

Nutrition



Think about food as falling into three categories:

1 Energy Burst + Slumps

- Pasta, baked goods
- Cereal, soda, other sugary foods
- Quick hit of glucose
- Energy spikes and then slumps

2 Energy Drains

- Heavy, high-fat meals
- Place high demand on the digestive system
- Reduce oxygen in the brain, leading us to feel “groggy”

3 Energy Sustainers

- High-nutrient foods
- Lean meat and fish, fruits and vegetables
- *Recent study: **The more fruits and vegetables people ate, the happier, more engaged, and more creative they were***

THE POWER OF MODERATION

Moderate:

- Highly processed/chemical foods
- Saturated fats
- Processed sugars
- Salt, Fatty/Processed/Smoked meats
- Caffeine, alcohol and tobacco

Enjoy:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Fish and lean meats
- Fiber-rich foods
- Nuts, grains and cereals
- Water and juices

Scott, E., *Stress and Nutrition: The Link Between Stress and Nutrition Deficiencies*; Blake, S., *Foods that Can Cause Stress*, Voices.Yahoo.com/health.

Friedman (2014); Sapolsky (2013); Connor et al. (2015)

Exercise



“Not exercising is like taking a depressant.”

—Tal Ben-Shahar

- Exercise improves short-term mood and can help alleviate long-term depression.
- Two weeks of exercise can significantly improve anxiety sensitivity.
- Exercise improves cognitive capacity both short-term (from a single walk or fitness session) and long-term (with regular exercise).
- Even moderate physical activity (e.g., gardening) can improve mood.

Exercise Tips:

- Engage in a minimum of three 45-minute sessions a week
- Exercise at an average heart rate of 60% of maximum frequency (mf) where $mf = (220 - \text{your age})$
- Commit to exercise with others
- Reward yourself after a good session
- Take time each day to move your body
- Stretch every day

Ben-Shahar (2010); Weir (2011); Goldman (2016); Rhodes (2013); Mayo Clinic Staff (2014)

Sleep



Sleep has a powerful impact on a variety of cognitive functions, including:

- **Alertness**

- ✓ Missing 90 minutes of sleep for one night can reduce alertness by 32%.
- ✓ Staying awake 6 hours past bedtime for 1 day dulls attentiveness as much as being drunk.

- **Memory**

- ✓ Sleep is essential both for remembering what we've already learned and for consolidating new memories.

- **Problem Solving**

- ✓ Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep improves creative problem solving by helping to integrate information.

Editors of Prevention (2011); Harvard Medical School (2008); Cai et al. (2008)

Sleep: Tips



Evening Sleep

- Stop eating several hours prior to bed
- Stop watching television prior to bed
- Read some inspiration material prior to bed
- Go to bed around 10:00pm and awake at around 5:00am
- Make sure the room is as dark and silent as possible
- Make sure that there is a fresh air supply in the room

Capitalize on Cat Naps

- **20 minutes** boosts alertness, mood, concentration
- **45 minutes** enhances creative thinking
- **60 minutes** boosts alertness up to 10 hours
- **90 minutes** helps to recoup lost sleep

Switch off Screens

Light-emitting devices use blue light, which:

- Suppresses melatonin (sleep-inducing hormone)
- Shifts circadian rhythms, affecting both sleep and organ function

Ackerman (2010); Schmerler (2015)

Leisure



Focused Leisure Activities not only take your mind off stressors, but also enable the brain to slow down and recharge

- Commit to a leisure activity that brings you joy and relaxation
- Select leisure activities that involve groups of people
- Engage at least once a month in this activity
- Schedule this monthly activity into your calendar
- Commit to this activity with a partner
- Schedule at least one pleasure a day and look forward to it

Dreyfus (2010); Janata (2008)

Music

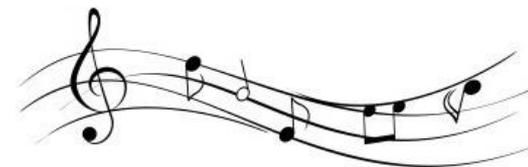


“There’s just something about music—particularly live music—that excites and activates the body... Music very much has a way of enhancing quality of life and can, in addition, promote recovery.”

—Joanne Loewy, Co-editor, *Music and Medicine*

Benefits of making and listening to music include:

- Lower rates of burnout
- Increased immunity
- Reductions in pain
- Faster recovery from stressful events
- Reduced blood pressure and lower levels of cortisol
- Decreased stress before and after surgery



One resource with music selected for stress-reducing features:

<https://www.unr.edu/counseling/virtual-relaxation-room/releasing-stress-through-the-power-of-music>

Thoma et al. (2013); Collingwood (2016); Novotney (2013)

Writing



Thoroughly documented impact:

Processing troubling events

- Reduced anxiety and depression
- Improved immunity

Cultivating gratitude

- Greater happiness and life satisfaction
- Decreased burnout
- Improved sleep
- Association with improvements in health and healthier habits

Additional Applications

- Focusing on boosting state of mind
- Preparing for difficult conversations
- Documenting tangible successes to refer to later



Allen (2010); Krpan et al. (2013)



Pace

- Practice slowing down in your day-to-day personal and professional activities:
 - ✓ Getting ready in the morning
 - ✓ Eating, walking, moving
 - ✓ Speaking, listening, reading, writing
 - ✓ Interacting with others, relating
 - ✓ Finishing the day, going to sleep

- Take simple pauses in the middle of activity:
 - ✓ Pauses differ from a breaks as they provide a short respite from the action
 - ✓ Pauses are most powerful when exercised with another person or a team

Mind/Body



Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Practices

Have been proven to significantly reduce the physiological impacts of stress

- Engage in meditation, prayer or deep reflection
- Practice Yoga, Tai Chi, Acupuncture or other mind/body disciplines
- Engage in massage therapy or other body relaxation techniques
- Practice smiling and laughing on a daily basis
- Perform random acts of kindness and generosity

Begley (2007); Sharma & Rush (2014); Caillet (2017)

Nature



Research shows the benefits

- ✓ Time in nature can reduce stress and mental fatigue.
- ✓ Contact with nature is linked with higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment.
- ✓ Even looking at pictures of landscapes can boost energy.
- ✓ Sunlight increases serotonin and improves sleep.



Simple steps can help

- ✓ Nature scenes from vacation on your computer desktop
- ✓ Peaceful nature sounds on your headphones
- ✓ Plants within your workspace
- ✓ Outdoor meetings

An et al. (2016); Largo-Wight et al. (2011); Seppälä & Berlin (2017)

Connecting



Regular, close social connections have a significant impact on:

- **State of Mind**
Having a friend you see on most days boosts happiness as much as earning \$100,000 more each year.
- **Health**
Social connections improve critical measures of physiological health, tied to longevity—including inflammation, hypertension, and obesity.
- **Business Results**
Having a best friend at work is a defining feature of the most productive workgroups, and is a key influence on retention.

Connecting Tips:

- Make sure you have individuals in your life you can talk about your stress with
- Make sure these individuals are able to listen fully to you without judgment
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
- When your stress level is high, request time with these individuals
- Request that these individuals first listen to you share your full experience including the emotional aspects
- Once shared, engage in a rich dialogue and solicit their advice and suggestions

Baumeister & Leary (1995); Smith (2013); Amortequi (2015); Yang et al. (2016); Gallup (1999); Friedman (2014)

Connecting



Two particularly beneficial modes of sharing include:

▪ Labeling emotions

- ✓ Decreases emotional intensity and reactivity
- ✓ Lowers activation in the amygdala (response to threat)
- ✓ Increases activation in the prefrontal cortex (executive function)



Trouble shared
is trouble halved.

- Dorothy Sayers -

▪ Venting (strategically)

- ✓ Within a time boundary
- ✓ With an empathetic listener who will not take it personally
- ✓ For a clear purpose: calming down (and/or driving constructive action)

Lieberman et al. (2007)

Changing Thinking: Visualization



Visualizing a positive outcome has almost the same impact on the brain as actually doing it.

- Prior to a challenging event, close your eyes and imagine how it could play out in real life:
 - ✓ Create a successful version of the event
 - ✓ Walk through how you would manage all of the challenging components

- Prior to having a difficult conversation, rehearse it quietly or “out loud” a few times:
 - ✓ Create a successful version of the conversation
 - ✓ Walk through how you would manage all of the challenging components

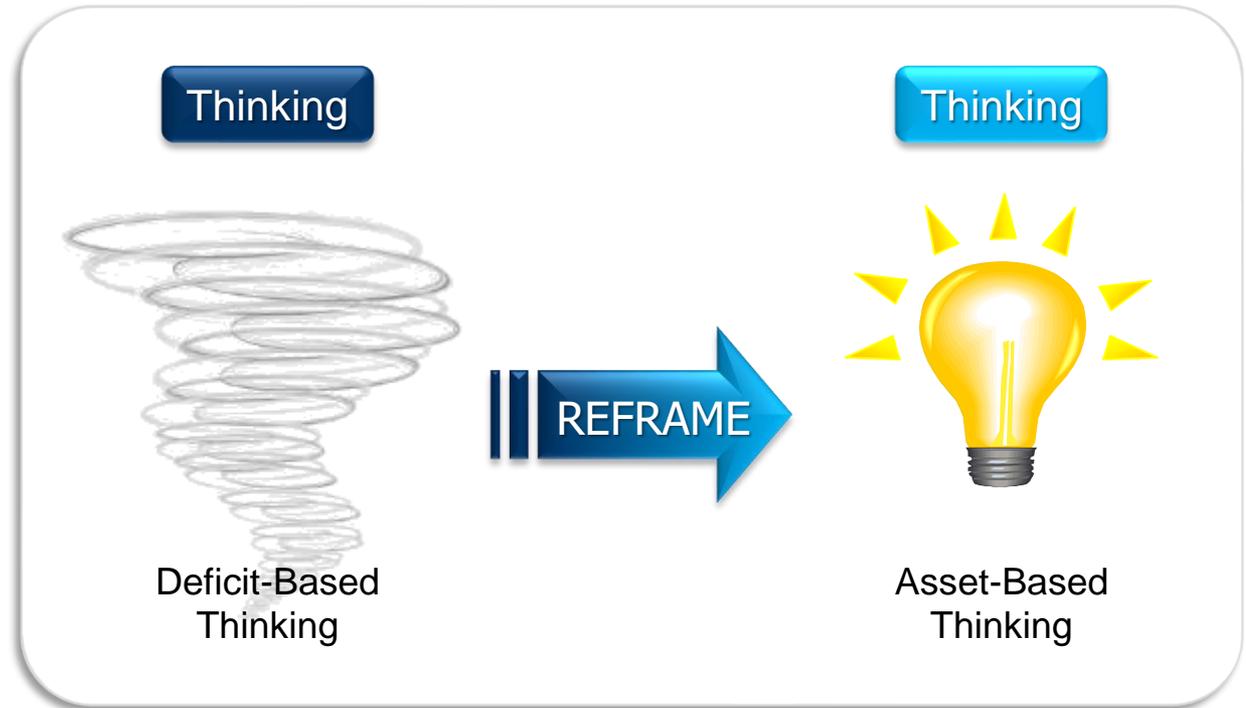
Recent research has revealed that the brain responds similarly to the thought of an action and to the real action. Athletes who have submitted themselves to electromyography have demonstrated that when they mentally rehearsed their moves, the electrical currents sent to their muscles by their brains were similar to the impulses sent when they were physically performing the moves. These experiments demonstrate that whether an activity is mentally imagined or is actively performed, the same neural pathways are stimulated, the same physiological changes are present, and the neural pathways are ultimately strengthened.

Berns (2010)

Changing Thinking: Cognitive Reframing



The Thinking Path



Caillet (2008); Cramer (2006)

Changing Thinking: Cognitive Reframing



Deficit-Based
Thinking

Thinking



Thinking

Asset-Based
Thinking

That's impossible ↓

I'm not smart enough ↓

This will never work ↓

I'll never make it ↓

All I see are problems ↓

There is never enough time ↓

They don't understand me ↓

What's wrong with me? ↓

↑ What is possible?

↑ I always give my best

↑ What would make this work?

↑ I can take one step at a time

↑ What opportunities do I see?

↑ There is always time for something

↑ I can share what I think

↑ What do I have to learn?

REFRAME

Caillet (2008); Cramer (2006)

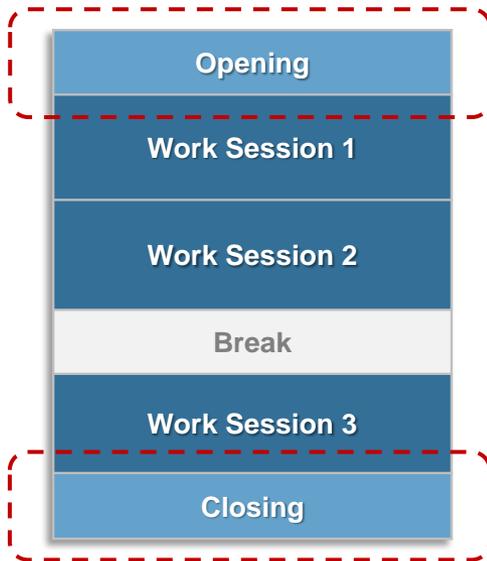
Time Management



Time Management Skills enhance our sense of control, reduce distractions and interruptions, and free up more leisure time

- Get up earlier in the morning and/or leave earlier to get an earlier start
- Plan 15 minutes between meetings
- Take a mandatory 5 to 10 minute break every 90 minutes to 2 hours:
 - ✓ Remove yourself from the work environment and offer yourself a real break
 - ✓ Engage one of the other strategies on the following pages during this time
- Have a proper lunch two or three times a week
- Schedule open work periods and personal events

Time Management: Meetings



Meeting Openings

- Breathing and mindfulness exercises
- Individual clearing or gratitude session
- Sharing individual meeting intentions
- Member shout-outs and appreciations
- Sharing meaningful quotes or stories

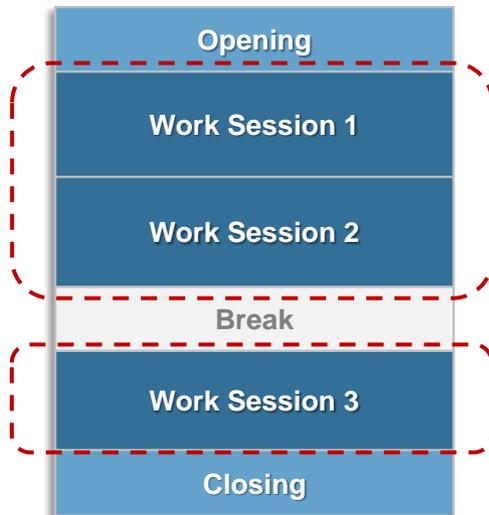
Meeting Closings

- Listening to individual insights and learnings
- Sharing appreciations and acknowledgments

Time Management: Meetings



Meeting Work Sessions



- Reading or watching something joyful, inspiring, or funny
- Inviting external parties to provide new and interesting insights and perspectives
- Engaging in new and creative process activities
- Meeting standing up or while walking
- Meeting outside or in creative spaces
- Bringing food and drinks and/or playing music
- Incorporating physical activity into the sessions

12 Strategies Action Plan

Using the table below, list the actions you will commit to doing in one or more of the 12 strategies to manage your stress and state of mind.

Strategy	Actions
Nutrition 	1. 2.
Exercise 	1. 2.
Sleep 	1. 2.
Leisure 	1. 2.

12 Strategies Action Plan

Using the table below, list the actions you will commit to doing in one or more of the 12 strategies to manage your stress and state of mind.

Strategy	Actions
Music 	1. 2.
Writing 	1. 2.
Pace 	1. 2.
Mind/Body 	1. 2.

12 Strategies Action Plan

Using the table below, list the actions you will commit to doing in one or more of the 12 strategies to manage your stress and state of mind.

Strategy	Actions
Nature 	1. 2.
Connecting 	1. 2.
Changing Thinking 	1. 2.
Time Management 	1. 2.

Appendix

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