

# Five Ways to Deal with Stress

By Andrew Tilin

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Stress and confidence are intertwined. Feel stress — often resulting from the idea that you’ve lost control, which is a common sensation nowadays — and confidence erodes. Different people experience stress from different conditions and situations, so there isn’t one recipe for beating it. “But there are general ways that people can change the way they perceive things,” says Dr. Paul Rosch, a professor of psychiatry at New York Medical College and president of the [American Institute of Stress](#). “You can get rid of faulty thinking styles.”

Here is Rosch’s prescription.

## 1. Keep a stress journal.

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Everyone deals with stress in his or her own way. Overeating, drinking, and smoking are common coping mechanisms, but not universal. And everyone has different triggers for stress. “Some people find jogging and meditation stressful,” Rosch says. The best way to pinpoint what causes you stress is by keeping track of the negative stimulus. “You’ll see certain patterns and themes,” he says. “If you have to accept certain things in your personal or work life, then maybe you can learn to change your reaction. Other problems can likely be avoided.” If you’re too busy to keep a stress journal, Rosch suggests at least writing down key, one-word reminders on a pad of paper or on sticky notes.

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## 2. Learn to say no.

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Many leaders create stress by taking on too much work. “You have to learn to say, I’m not the only person who can do this,” Rosch says. Saying “no” outside the workplace is also important. If the evening television newscast will only add to your tension, don’t tune in. If you’re often stressed about time, force yourself to occasionally slow down. Not everything in life has a deadline. “Deliberately stand in the longest line in the supermarket,” Rosch says. “Or admire the artwork in your bank.”

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### 3. Forgive.

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“It’s an imperfect world. People make mistakes,” Rosch says. “Try to learn to forgive — even yourself — and move on. Being pissed forever isn’t helpful.”

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### 4. Be creative about cost cutting.

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Occasionally, Rosch says, compromises work better than layoffs. Perhaps you need the services of a worker — but you don’t need him full-time during the slowdown. Lessen your stress by negotiating a deal that suits you and gives him at least some job security. “Tell your employee the situation and ask him for suggestions,” Rosch says. “Will he take a substantial reduction in salary? Work half-time? If possible, let him be part of the solution.”

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### 5. Find a support network.

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During a crisis, CEOs can lean on one another’s shoulders. One of the largest executive peer group organizations is [Vistage International](#), which holds intimate, monthly group meetings for business leaders in locations around the world. But there are others, such as [CEO Support Systems](#) and [GovernBest](#). It might help to network with nearby business leaders for support. “It’s important for you to be able to share your feelings with people you can trust,” Rosch says. “Expressing what you’re going through can be incredibly cathartic.”

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