

10 FRESH MINDSET HABITS TO

Manage Stress and Bring Balance to Your Life

Simple, Practical Habits to Stay Calm,
Focused, and in Control Every Day.



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Introduction

Stress—just hearing the word can make your shoulders tense up and your mind spiral.

Suddenly, you're picturing all the unfinished tasks, the unread emails, the laundry pile that seems to have developed a life of its own. Your first instinct? Hide under a blanket and pretend the world doesn't exist.



Tempting, right? But as much as we'd love to hit pause on life, stress is an unavoidable part of it. It's always lurking, waiting for the perfect moment to throw a curveball your way.

Stress is an ever-present part of life, and it will always be there whether we like it or not. Some days will be more stressful than others due to factors both within and outside our control.

Life happens, and there will always be unexpected influences that will knock you off course and want to test your will.

Some days, stress is a mild inconvenience—like misplacing your keys when you're already running late. Other days, it's a full-blown hurricane, with deadlines looming, unexpected bills piling up, and family demands stretching you thin. And let's be real, life has a funny way of testing us at the worst possible times. The universe doesn't wait until you're feeling calm and collected to throw in a flat tyre, a sick kid, or an urgent work email. Yep, there are a million different examples that I can come up with, and you all have your own highlights reel. Nope. It piles everything on at once just to see what you're made of.

It is vital that we remember, though, that stress itself isn't the enemy. It's just part of being human. Some stress is even useful—it can push us to meet deadlines, solve problems, and get things done. But when stress overstays, it's welcome; when it's running the show and leaving you feeling exhausted, irritable, and overwhelmed, that's when we need to step in and take charge.

But it is not that event or person that is causing us stress, it is now we are reacting to it. Let's think about that for a moment. I think we all know people who react differently. One is as cool as a cucumber, and any difficulties are just waved away like water off a duck's back. For another, they are a constant stress ball, always looking for potential problems in every aspect of their lives. They both have similar stress influences coming at them, they just handle them differently.

Let's put it another way. Two people can experience the exact same situation—say, getting stuck in traffic on the way to an important meeting—and yet have completely different reactions. One person shrugs, turns up the radio, and enjoys a moment of forced relaxation. The other? Fuming, gripping the steering wheel, and feeling their blood pressure spike with every second that ticks by. Same situation. Totally different experience.

That should tell us that stress isn't just about what's happening around us. It's about what's happening inside us. Our thoughts, perspectives, and mindset determine how much stress we let in. We can be our own filters as to what we accept and what we block out of our minds. It is our mind that dictates the level of stress we need to experience. We can make it as hard or as easy as we want. We control the narrative of how we react to circumstances.

Sure, life will keep throwing chaos our way, but we get to decide how we handle it. We can either let stress rule our lives or learn how to manage it before it takes over.

So, how do we shift our relationship with stress?

We have to accept stress, boys and girls. There is no way to sugarcoat this. Stress isn't going anywhere, I'm afraid. It's like the old, deserted, broken-down car in the neighbour's driveway. It may annoy you, and even though you may think of ways to blow it up, no amount of thinking is going to make it simply go away. All it is doing is living rent-free in your head.

Think of your mind as a glass jar. There is only so much we can put in it, so let's fill it with good thoughts. Stress is always going to be part of life. But instead of fighting it, what if we worked with it? Acknowledge that stressful situations will arise, and instead of resisting them, focus on how you respond to them.

We have to have perspective. Not everything is an emergency, even if it feels like it is in the moment. Chances are it is not as important or as urgent as you think it is. Ask yourself: Will this matter in a week? A month? A year? Chances are, most of what stresses us out isn't as big as it seems.

Managing stress doesn't mean eliminating it altogether—that's impossible. But it does mean finding tools that help you stay grounded when life gets overwhelming. Small shifts can make a huge difference.

At the end of the day, stress isn't about what's happening to you—it's about how you handle it. And the good news? You have more control than you think.



Self-Reflection Questions

Self-reflection is a powerful tool for personal growth, offering clarity and insight into your thoughts, emotions, and actions.

I invite you to pause, look inward, and engage in honest self-examination.

These questions aren't about judgment or perfection—they're about gaining understanding and empowering you to create meaningful change.



Self-Reflection Questions

Overall, do I consider myself a stressful person?

Why or why not?

Do I overact in stressful situations?

If so, what causes this?

If not, why is this beneficial?

Self-Reflection Questions

Do I see stress as something that is in my control?

How do I handle stress now?

Is it working?

How can I improve my stress management?

What habits or routines can I implement each day to help manage my stress?

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Identify Your Stress Triggers

The first step in managing stress is figuring out what's causing it. Sounds simple, right? It should be, but life has a funny way of making even the obvious things feel complicated. It's like trying to fix a leak without knowing where the water's coming from. You can slap duct tape all over the place, but if you don't find the source, you'll just keep dealing with the mess.

Stress works the same way. You can't manage it effectively unless you know where it's actually coming from. And yet, most of us don't stop to do this. Instead, we power through, hoping that if we just keep moving, the weight of it all will magically disappear. It simply won't.

If we had to be brutally honest with ourselves, we'd admit that half the time, we don't even stop to acknowledge what's making us feel like we're carrying a backpack full of bricks. We just feel the weight, let it drag us down, and keep going. It's like we're hoping that if we ignore it long enough, stress will get bored and go bother someone else. But stress isn't that polite. It lingers, festers, and if left unchecked starts running the damn show.

Stress doesn't look the same for everyone. The things that send one person into a full-blown meltdown might barely register as a blip on someone else's radar. Take running late, for example. For some people, it's a catastrophe. A full-on, panic-inducing nightmare. Their heart races, their palms sweat, and their brain goes into overdrive, listing out all the possible consequences of being five minutes behind schedule. For others? A casual shrug and a "no big deal" attitude. Same situation, completely different reactions. Why? Because stress is personal. It's not about what is happening—it's about how we respond to it.

So, what's your stress trigger? Work pressure? Financial worries? An overflowing to-do list that seems to grow every time you cross something off, like some sort of productivity robot? Maybe it's all of the above. Or maybe it's something else entirely. It could be social situations, family drama, or that nagging feeling that you should be "further ahead" in life. Whatever it is, you can't manage stress if you don't know where it's coming from. That's why this first step is so simple yet so crucial: you have to take a few minutes to identify exactly what's weighing you down.

And here's where I lose some people, because, yes, you actually have to write it down. Not just think about it. Not just make a mental note and then promptly forget it five minutes later. You need to put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) and spell it out.

Why? Because seeing your stressors in black and white makes them real. It takes them from vague, looming anxieties and turns them into something tangible—something you can actually do something about. It's like looking under the bed when your kid is convinced there's a monster there. Once you shine a light on it, you realize it's not quite as terrifying as your mind made it out to be.

Think of stress like a tangled knot. If you just keep yanking at it without knowing where the twists and loops are, you're only going to make it worse. But when you take a moment to trace where it starts, you can begin to work through it strategically.

Maybe you can't eliminate every source of stress, but once you know the root cause, you can at least take steps to reduce its impact. If work stress is eating you alive, can you delegate more? Set boundaries? If financial stress is keeping you up at night, can you make a plan, even a small one, to get things under control? If your to-do list feels endless, can you prioritize the things that actually need to get done instead of just running yourself into the ground?

This isn't about magical, instant solutions. You won't wake up tomorrow stress-free just because you wrote down "work deadlines" or "overcommitment" in a notebook. But what you will have is clarity. And clarity gives you power. It shifts you from feeling like stress is just this uncontrollable force ruining your life to realizing that, actually, you have more control than you think. Even if you can't eliminate the stressor entirely, you can change how you respond to it.

Because at the end of the day, stress isn't just about external circumstances. It's about how we process those circumstances. The same situation that makes one person unravel can be handled calmly by someone else, and the difference isn't just luck or genetics—it's mindset, habits, and the ability to recognize what's going on internally before it spirals out of control.

So, start there. Identify it. Name it. Write it down.

Take a moment to acknowledge that, yes, stress is real, and yes, it's affecting you, but no, it doesn't have to run your life. Once you know what's triggering it, you can start making changes—big or small—to regain some control. You might not be able to eliminate every stressor, but you sure as hell can stop letting it control you.

And that? That's how you start taking your power back.



Thought-Generating Questions

What are the moments in my day when I feel the most stressed, and what patterns do I notice?

How do I typically react to stress? Do I avoid it, confront it, or try to ignore it?

If I could change one thing about how I handle stress, what would it be?

The Activity

Task 1: Pinpoint Your Stressors

Take five minutes to list everything that has been making you feel stressed lately.

Be specific—write down what happened, when it happened, and how it made you feel.

Group your stressors into categories, such as work, relationships, finances, health, or personal expectations.

Your Action Plan

Scribble down some ideas, notes or plans.

The Activity

Task 2: Recognise Your Reactions

For each stressor you listed, write down how you typically respond to it.

Do you feel anxious, irritated, or drained? Do you take action, withdraw, or procrastinate?

Identify which responses help and which make your stress worse.

Your Action Plan

Scribble down some ideas, notes or plans.

The Activity

Task 3: Bring It Into Perspective

Look at my list and ask yourself which of these stressors you can control and which are out of your hands.

Highlight or circle the ones that you have some ability to change or influence.

Choose one stressor to focus on and brainstorm one small step you can take to reduce its impact.

Your Action Plan

Scribble down some ideas, notes or plans.

Self-Reflection Questions

What went right?

What surprised me the most about my stressors once I wrote them down?

What was challenging?

Did I notice any unhelpful patterns in how I react to stress, and what can I do differently next time?

How can I improve?

What is one practical step I can take today to manage my stress more effectively?

