

USING HEARTMATH™ FOR STRESS REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

Many people are unaware that there are two categories of stress: Eustress and Distress. Eustress is the good stress that motivates you to continue working and can enhance your performance. This "good stress" is what eustress can be identified as and some people enjoy it. Everyone needs a little bit of stress in their life in order to continue to be happy, motivated, challenged and productive. It is when this stress is no longer tolerable and/or manageable that distress comes in.

“Bad stress”, or distress, is when the good stress becomes too prolonged and too much to bear or cope with. Tension builds, there is no longer any fun in the challenge, there seems to be no relief, no end in sight. It is overwhelming. This is the kind of stress most of us are familiar with and this is the kind of stress that leads to poor decision making.

Instantaneous physiological symptoms of distress include hypertension, rapid breathing, sweating and generalised tension. Behavioural symptoms include overeating, loss of appetite, drinking, smoking and the triggering of negative coping mechanisms.

Stress, depending on the type, can be a ghastly thing, or it can be an opportunity to achieve more mastery in your life. It is very important to learn how to ‘hack’ your stress levels for optimal performance. Too much stress can make you weak, fat, and infertile. Stress causes many problems, but one of the most powerful is decreased lifespan. Not only does stress decrease the quality of your life – it also decreases how long you will live.

The trick to coping with stress is not to expect that you can eliminate it; but rather, to manage the symptoms of stress. Teaching you how to do that has become a massive industry. But in the end, it all boils down to a few good tried-and-true skills you can learn and the willingness to work at it.

Those who are familiar with HeartMath™ know that not only it can improve your performance on a daily basis, but in fact, the longevity and anti-aging benefits it offers are just as important.



HeartMath™ understands stress because they have researched it in depth – for more than three decades. While many researchers today hold that it is our perception of events, not the actual events themselves that cause most of our stress, HeartMath™ goes further. Their studies show that it is our emotional responses to our perceptions of events that cause much of our unhealthful stress levels.

Stress is a killer. It is so hard on your body; it may even decrease the speed of wound healing. It also makes you more susceptible to many forms of disease such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer and others which can all lead to decreased lifespan.

People with the highest stress levels live far shorter lives than those who are more relaxed. In one study, people with the highest stress levels lived a decade – yes, ten whole years – shorter than those with the lowest stress levels. Even when baffling variables were accounted for, people with the happiest and most relaxed mind-sets lived longer than their more negative and stressed counterparts.

People who are less satisfied with their lives are more likely to suffer from mental and physical disabilities. Even up to 20 years after a major depressive episode, these people still have a higher risk of early death. On the other hand, happy people have the opposite effect. They tend to live longer, fuller, and healthier lives.

So it is obvious that effective stress management is an important component in living a longer and happier life. However, for some that's easier said than done. There are several ways to hack your happiness and hack your stress levels.

Extensive meditation is associated with an increase in telomere length, better mental health, better immune function, and extended life. Clinical trials have also shown that meditation can decrease distracting, stressful, or annoying thoughts. The research into the effects of stress management on longevity is ongoing, but most of it suggests that mastering stress is a great way to extend your life.

Traditional meditation is one of the many ways to reduce your stress levels, but most people I work with do not have time for long sessions of focused breathing on a regular basis. However, there is a convenient, effective, safe, and even fun way to hack your stress levels in minimal time: HeartMath™.

Simply stated, HeartMath™ is a stress management system that helps you synchronise (effectively 'reboot') your brain and heart for optimal stress resistance and mental performance. It trains you to optimise your heartbeat to levels that are normally only possible with traditional meditation or yoga.

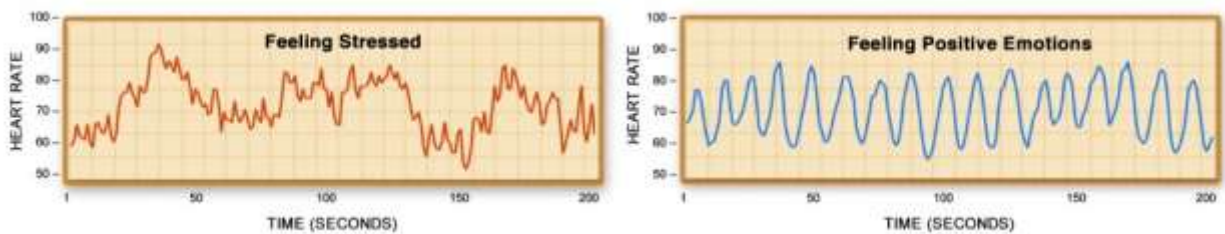
I chose to become a certified HeartMath™ coach for several reasons: this kind of training is one of my most important hacks of all time, it is science based and it is very practical and effective.

The beauty of HeartMath is its simplicity. You can practise many of the HeartMath™ techniques without any tools or training, but for measurable results, try an emWave. The emWave2 is a small device that will fit in the palm of your hand and displays your heart's level of coherence. Once you clip the sensor to your earlobe, you focus your mind on making the small light on the emWave turn from red, to blue, to green. Once it turns green, you're in a state of high coherence – this is where you want to be.



HeartMath offers many tools for raising coherence and maintaining resilience. It is easy to learn and starts working for most people almost instantly. With minimal time, you can understand your own stress and learn some simple and effective ways to reduce it, increase energy and resilience and renew the joy of life.

Coherence is an important state you should know about. Raising coherence helps you feel, think and sleep better, do better at work and school and improve communication skills. Learn how your heart, emotions, stress and coherence all relate and how your heart is as smart as your brain and affects almost everything you do.



A HeartMath Tip:

Tool: Take the Significance Out

Assume objectivity about an issue or feeling, as if it were another person having this problem. One of the first things you may notice is how much more compassionate and understanding you are toward this imagined person than you have been toward yourself.

- Tell yourself with genuine heart intent, “Take out the significance.”
- Breathe ease and calm while telling yourself to “take the significance out of whatever is going on.”
- Dissolve the significance a little at a time. Imagine you are soaking the significance in the warmth of your heart.

Just the intent will bring you new powers to take the significance out of inefficient emotional reactions so you can see new options and act on them.

Benefits of taking the significance out

- Greater clarity about what you can accomplish.
- Experience feelings of relief and calm.
- Become more understanding – of yourself and others.
- Appreciation for what matters most.