
Seven Steps for Dealing with Stress

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Prof Steve Peters' seven step process for dealing with stressful events as they arise

1. Recognise what's happening and trigger your own stress management routine
 2. Slow your thinking down
 3. Escape
 4. Put it into perspective
 5. Create a plan
 6. Reflection and activation
 7. Smile if you can, grieve if you need to
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Peters advises looking out for “in the moment” signs of stress in yourself and responding with your own trigger word. He uses “Change”

Step 1: “Change”



2: Visualise a “Pause” button. Press it and slow your thinking down. Try counting slowly down from 10 to 1

- The NHS website link below suggests doing this for 3 to 5 minutes. Steve Peters suggests that taking even one deep breath can help stave off the risk of getting “hijacked” by your emotions

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/ways-relieve-stress/>



“Whenever you want to stop the Chimp, always actively slow your thinking down. This will work in ALL situations. It is another excellent way to manage the Chimp”

Steve Peters

3: Physically distance yourself from the situation or say that you need some time to manage your response. “Don’t be afraid to be assertive if you need time to think”. It’s often helpful to let people know that you’re finding something stressful



4: The Helicopter

Make sure you have the situation in its proper perspective



Think about the list of things on your worry list for this week

Here are some questions Peters suggests for getting an issue into perspective. Just to be clear, some issues are very significant. This is just intended to test whether your response is warranted. Imagine your whole life as a timeline from start to finish and see where you are at this particular point in time. Ask yourself::

1. How important is this situation to the rest of my life?

2. Is this situation going to last forever or will it pass and things change?

3. What are the really important things in my life and is this one of them, or has it changed them?"

5: A Plan for you, the situation and then others

- What can you do to react differently and would this help?
- Can you change the way you're seeing the situation and would this alter it?
- Then look at the situation and circumstance and see if these can be changed
- What can you do practically and what do you have to accept and work with?
- Finally look at any people involved and ask if they can help you or if you can support them



6: Reflection and activation

- Change what can be changed and control what can be controlled
- First identify your overall goal
- Then a “bite size” goal that is a significant milestone on the way there
- Finally try to identify a “right now” goal that can get you started on the path as soon as possible
- If you have no scope for action call on someone appropriate to help you



7. Let emotions back into the process

- Peters advises smiling or even laughing at yourself if you over-reacted
 - Conversely, if the situation calls for it give yourself time and space for grief and the help of friends
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Thank you

