

Coping Strategies

-- Or --

“Suggestions on ways to beat the stress”



Relax. Take time for relaxation and for lunch. This sounds obvious, but the number of people who don't actually block time out for relaxation, and the number of people who don't sit down to a “real” lunch, is just astonishing. Take time out to relax every day, even if it's just 10 minutes of quiet time in the morning.

Take at least two consecutive weeks for vacation. Perhaps you don't think you have the luxury for this, but work toward this. And yes, your job will not fall apart if you take two weeks for yourself.

Decrease or discontinue caffeine. Caffeine is a great stimulant; your body doesn't need it, particularly when you're faced with a stressful event.

Take care of your body, through diet and exercise.

Another obvious one, but one we often miss. Watch what you eat. Get plenty of appropriate exercise. Even 30-40 minutes of moderate walking four times a week will do wonders for you. The old adage of “no pain, no gain”, doesn't apply.

Set boundaries between home

and work. While it's not always possible, try and keep “home” at home and “work” at work. When you bring “work” home, or “home” to work, you're only adding stress to what is probably already a stressful environment.

Avoid isolation. Don't just exist in the world. Exist within a community. That community is not just your work place, but also your neighborhood, your place of worship, your volunteer organizations. No person is an island; we all need to be connected. Work at being connected. One thought: join the CISM team and give back to other emergency services workers; participate actively in the mission of the team and help your peers.

Balance. Balance. Balance.

Try for balance amongst the various roles of your life over the period of a week. Each of us plays different roles: parent, spouse, lover, emergency services professional, volunteer, caregiver, worshipper, etc. Over the course of a week, try to do something in each one of your important roles (focus on no more than 7 roles in a given week).

Drink lots of water. You've heard it before. You'll hear it again. You should drink at least three liters of water a day. No matter what. Keeping hydrated will not only help you control your stress, it will provide your body with the necessary water to help stay physically healthy.



Focus on the things you can actually do.

We all have a circle of influence (those things we can actually impact) and a circle of concern (those things that we're concerned about, but can't actually influence). Focus on the things you can actually influence.

