

Eight Ways to Beat the Stress of Losing Your Job.

It doesn't quite measure up to experiencing the death of a spouse, a divorce or being thrown in jail, but losing your job still ranks as one of life's 10 most stressful events.

So it's natural to feel pressure when you're laid off. You're worried about your family, finances and future. Not to mention you've been tossed overboard into the worst job market in decades.

Having a certain amount of stress can be productive. It serves as a motivator, giving you a sense of urgency and keeping you alert to opportunities. Yet, when not controlled, stress can lead to even more problems, some of which can be far worse than being unemployed.

Too much stress can damage your health and your relationships with friends and loved ones. So, as you develop your job search strategy, I encourage you include a category called, "Stress Busters." Write down the specific things you intend to do minimize the stress you're bound to feel over the coming weeks and months. Then, periodically check your list to see if you're following through. And constantly look for opportunities to expand your list.

Here are some examples to get you started:

1. Get plenty of sleep.

Target how many hours you ideally want to sleep each night. If you're having trouble sleeping, there are a number of websites on the Net that provide excellent advice on ways to get a better night's rest. If the problem is severe, talk to your health care provider.

2. Watch your diet.

It's always a good idea to maintain proper nutrition, but especially so during stressful times. Being at home and having easy access to junk food or leftovers make for an unhealthy combination.

3. Start an exercise program.

Being temporarily unemployed is an excellent time to begin the exercise program you never seemed to have time for when you were working. If you need to lose a few pounds, set a weekly goal. You'll not only improve your health, but your self-image.

4. Cut back on the caffeine and alcohol.

You'll not only feel better, chances are you'll sleep better, too (at least, that's what the experts say).

5. Maintain a positive attitude.

Eliminate the negative "self-talk" that inevitably comes with unemployment. Stop yourself every time you hear your inner voice saying "I can't" or "It's impossible" or "I didn't get the job interview" or "I'm not qualified." And avoid negative people.

6. Be inspired by others who overcame adversity.

Take comfort in knowing that others survived and accomplished great things during difficult times. Read books or articles (or rent movies) about religious, political or humanitarian leaders who overcame seemingly insurmountable odds. As difficult as your circumstances may be, they'll seem far less daunting.

7. Learn a New Hobby or Skill.

Break out the old golf clubs you haven't used for awhile. Learn a new language or software program. Take up yoga. If you have trouble discovering a new passion, just fill in this blank: "I've always wanted to learn to _____, but never had the time."

8. Volunteer.

Volunteering for a nonprofit or getting involved in your community is a way to feed the soul and relieve stress. You'll not only be helping others, you'll be helping yourself. Volunteering is an excellent way to expand your network of people who can offer job leads. At the very least, it's another positive item you can add to your resume.

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Joel Garfinkle provides outplacement services to displaced workers. His proven and structured 9-step program helps you find a new job quickly. Joel has over 15 years of first-hand expertise in the job search and career transition field. Visit Joel online at [Garfinkle Outplacement Services](#).

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