

## Alcoholics | Managing Stress

The one thing that virtually all alcoholics have in common is the stress of living in this modern age. So much has changed for people since we first enjoyed those days of youth culture, when hairstyle and rock music seemed like the most important things in the world. But, like all generations before them and to come, we had to grow up and take on the responsibilities of the world, making a living and figuring out their place in this big complicated world. Many times its more difficult for the recovering Alcoholic or addict.

Stress comes from a lot of sources. Obviously, we get it from work. We think of the work place as a source of stress because it is a place where making a living is paramount and there are daily demands, deadlines and schedules to be met, something we didn't worry about when we were in the depths of our disease. In addition, many of us have to deal with difficult people during our workdays, and God only knows that for many of those in recovery difficult people seem to come our way often, this only compounds the stress.

Stress doesn't end when we walk out of our workplace. Traffic itself can be a stress. Then the joys of raising children and marriage, it is common to return home from a difficult day only to face serious problems at home. In this situation, it seems that the stress and anxiety just keep mounting up.

This is not the adult life most alcoholics envisioned in their youth, days when they were idealistic and the world was their oyster, nobody told us that the reason the pearl is so beautiful is because sand (e.g. stress) creates stress on the clam who copes with it by covering it with the smooth material. So stress can build us up and make something beautiful. But it can also tear us down and lead us back to drinking drugs or drive us into serious medical and mental problems if we don't develop some coping techniques to deal with it.

Some good coping mechanisms that many alcoholics have found helpful to defray the stress in their lives include...

Get away from it. To put the cares of the world in perspective, we have to get away from them for a while. If nothing else, just soaking in a hot bathtub with a good magazine and some happy music can wash away the cares of the world and let them swirl down the drain with the bubbles. But look for chances to relax and put those worries aside for a little bit. It will help you calm your mind, rest your system and be ready to deal with those issues without so much anxiety, which doesn't do anybody any good.

Partner with your family. Your spouse and children don't want to see you stressed out. But sometimes they don't know how much they add to the problems when they throw the problems of the day at you as soon as you walk through the door. It's good for them to see the world through your eyes. But remember that they are stressed with school or issues of work and relationships too. So partner together to have a little time to just be family and love away that anxiety. Everybody will be better for it.

Take time for health. Its strange but our diet and rest are the things we need the most to cope with stress and yet those are the areas of life that are most damaged if we let stress wear us down. So go back to basics and make sure you get good meals, good rest and take care of yourself. It will make you a better worker and stronger for your family as well.

And of course attend your meetings. Are you using your meetings for the good of your sobriety, are you developing [Sober Friends](#), is your meeting time being spent to learn the life skills that the 12 steps provide?, or are you using the meetings to create more drama and stress?

Seeing stress as a serious enemy to your lifestyle above and beyond the causes of stress is a big step forward to not letting this enemy continue to damage your ability to be a good worker and family member. But if you take action to keep stress from dominating your life, you are doing something very good for yourself and making yourself more able to attack problems and solve them with creativity and intelligence.

## About the Author

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