

12 Ways to Turn Overwhelm Around



(photo credit: Getty Images)

We are living in a time of overwhelm. We have all felt it, many of us deal with it on a consistent basis, and it erodes our potential, our results, and our happiness on a multiplicity of levels.

Let's take a look at what happens when we are stressed or [overwhelmed](#). The prefrontal cortex is the part of the brain that controls executive functions; clear thinking, decision-making, strategizing, planning, etc. When we are stressed the blood flow to the prefrontal cortex is reduced, making clear thinking increasingly difficult. The more stressed or anxious you become, the more difficult it is to focus and think.

When we feel overwhelmed, we subconsciously look for a distraction to remove stressful feelings. Rather than completing a project or dealing with a difficult situation, we surf the web, watch a program rather than doing our work, or dealing with a difficult situation because our thinking brain, our prefrontal cortex is not working properly because our survival/fight or flight mechanism is in play.

The good news is that we can learn how to deal with overwhelm and stress. Rather than beating yourself up for going into fight/reactionary, flight or freeze response, try one of these 5-minute exercises knowing that the stress, anger or overwhelm will pass, and you will be able to refocus on your most important objective after refocus, repurpose and repower.

Here are 12 5-minute exercises (cool tools) to help beat stress or overwhelm

1. Do **"The Pause"** a mindfulness exercise that takes 2-5 minutes a day and is transformative if practiced regularly, and science confirms its positive impact on your potential, results, and health. Close your eyes and take at least three deep breaths. Focus on the air going in through your nose and out through your nose or mouth. Relax your jaw, face, neck, shoulders, and arms.
2. **Take charge of tension by releasing it, fast.** Clench whatever part of your body is tense and release it. Even better, do your whole body-clenching & releasing.
3. **Drink/sip ice water.** Fluids move hormones into exactly the right places for sustaining energy, and those same fluids eliminate toxic wastes that can accumulate and wear you down.
4. **Change your state, move your body,** take 5 minutes to get energetic. Inactivity is an unnatural state for us.
5. **Laugh, yes have a joke collection or clips** you can watch

for 5 minutes that make you laugh. Laughing gives your brain an aerobic workout, and it is an excellent stress reliever and mood booster. Smiling automatically elevates our mood.

6. **Take a 5-minute time out. Block out all stress or worries.** Think about something that really makes you happy or visualize your favorite place or vacation spot. Yes, take a happiness time out!
7. **Meditate, pray, listen to music, or read poetry for 5 minutes.**
8. **Journal for up to 5 minutes,** longitudinal studies have proven that keeping a confidential emotional journal where you can write out your deepest emotions, releasing the tension associated with them not only makes people feel better, but it also enhances healing and recuperation time.
9. **Take a 1 minute time out. Wiggle your toes** (it distracts your brain) Block out all stress or worries. Think about something that really makes you happy. Yes, take a happiness time out!
10. **Doodle or color for five minutes. Creativity is a great stress reliever.**

What worked in the past will not work now or in the future. It is time to realize that there are new ways to deal with a whole new world, ways that will help us build what I call the Q skills, strengths that drive our best selves, best work, and best lives at the speed of change and even chaos. A new mindset and focus that enhances emotional and cognitive dexterity at the speed of change. [Click here to learn more about 30 skills](#)

Make the critical shift forward because it is possible to retrain our brains, recenter our hearts, and learn to think, communicate, and collaborate better at the speed of change.

If you would like to learn more about building a growth mindset, improved communication, collaboration, and leadership in the face of change, please do not hesitate to contact me. I have recently completed a certification in trauma counseling and welcome people who also have life issues they want to deal with. Personal and professional leadership are critical and our ability to achieve transformative results is real! Don't think how, think NOW. [Book a 20-minute consultation before the next change, challenge, or stressor.](#)

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[The Empowerment Compendium](#)

[Men & Women Leading Forward | Building the 3Q Leadership Skills](#)

[Leadership Means Building A Community of Purpose](#)



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IRENE BECKER

E-mail: irene@justcoachit.com

Phone
(416)671-4726

Skype
beckerirene