

Stress Management Workbook 4

Activate your true potential today!



Freedom Learning - for everyone for life!

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Key Points

Stress-reduction strategies organized into 4 Paths:

1. Avoid Path

- Over-committing
- Pessimistic or negative thinking
- Associating with highly stressful people
- Worrying over trivial matters

2. Always-Do Path

- Take regular relaxing breaks
- Plan ahead and manage your time
- Set achievable daily goals (e.g., one fewer task per day)

3. Opportunity Path

- Practice breathing exercises (7 seconds inhale / 11 seconds exhale)
- Cultivate gratitude (identify and appreciate small positives daily)

4. Spend Path

- Spend time on proven stress-reducers:
 - Eating stress-taming foods
 - Walking and nature time
 - Exercise
 - Dark chocolate (in moderation)

Exercises

In-Session Exercise: A 5-minute guided breathing and music relaxation:

- Find a quiet, dim space
- Get comfortable & place finger on pulse
- Close eyes, play calming music
- Breathe: 7 sec in / 11 sec out
- Focus only on breath & music

Exercise 2: Guided Breathing Reflection

After the 5-minute exercise above, journal:

1. How did your body feel (pulse, tension)?

2. How did your mind feel (thoughts, mood)?

3. Rate your stress level (1–10) before and after

Exercise 1: Identify Your Path Priorities

- **List** one actionable change for each of the four paths that you can start today.

| Intention | Action |
|-------------|--------|
| Avoid | |
| Always do | |
| Opportunity | |
| Spend | |

- **Commit:** Pick one change and practice it every day this week.

Activities

Activity 1: “Path Swap” Challenge

- **Partner up** or work solo.
- **Assign** yourself one path to over-emphasize (e.g., Focus only on the Spend Path this week).
- **Observe:** Which other paths you neglect and how that impacts your stress.
- **Adjust:** Next week, rotate to a different path to maintain balance.

Notes on this activity

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Activity 2: Stress-Free Daily Planner

- **Design** a one-day schedule that weaves in each path:
 - Morning: Avoid (block unnecessary commitments)
 - Midday: Always-Do (planning break)
 - Afternoon: Opportunity (gratefulness journal + breathing)
 - Evening: Spend (walk + dark-chocolate snack)
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Reflections

1. Which of the four paths comes most naturally to you—and which do you neglect?

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2. How did the breathing exercise change your awareness of fight-or-flight symptoms?

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3. What simple “Avoid Path” triggers can you eliminate right now?

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Action Plan

1. **Weekly Check-In:** Every Friday, review one path and assess progress.
 2. **Accountability Buddy:** Pair with a friend to remind each other of daily path actions.
 3. **Set Realistic Goals:** Choose one breathing break (5 min) daily and schedule it.
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Final Summary

Managing stress is not about huge lifestyle overhauls but about four simple paths: avoiding unnecessary stressors, always building in relaxation and planning, seeking daily opportunities to calm and be grateful, and spending time on proven stress-busters. By intentionally weaving these paths into your routine—and practicing the 7/11 breathing exercise—you can switch off your fight-or-flight response at will, reclaim calm, and build lasting resilience.

Good luck, and keep practicing !

Inspiring Quote “It’s not stress that kills us, it is our reaction to it.” — Hans Selye. Harness your power to react positively—so stress doesn’t manage you.