



# 10 Ways to Overcome Overload

DLA Family Support Program  
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# Seminar Overview

Recognizing and dealing with stress

How to make a change in your life

Prioritizing, planning and organizing

Dealing with wasted time and procrastination

Setting limits, delegating and getting help

# 1. Recognize and Deal with Stress

- What is Stress

A physical or emotional response to major life events

- Signs of Stress

- Difficulty sleeping
- Headaches
- Shortness of breath
- Sweaty hands
- Nervous tics
- Teeth grinding
- Irritability or hostility
- Binge eating
- Drug or alcohol use

- (Top 5 things that cause stress in your life)



# Other Signs of Stress

## The Hurry Pattern

As stress levels rise, our tolerance for waiting often goes down.

## Being Overscheduled

We need to live by schedules but also learn when to let schedules go. **Tip:** Designate at least two hours every weekend as “free” time. No chores, errands, task for scheduled activities.

## “No-sleep/more-caffeine spiral”

**Tip:** Starting tonight, go to bed 30 minutes earlier than usual. Keep it up for a week and see if you feel more rested and less stressed.

# How to Manage Stress

## Recognizing Myths

Myth 1: “It’s urgent, so it has to be done.”

It’s natural to respond to urgency, but not always necessary.

Myth 2: “It’s up to me to get it done.”

Many of us believe that asking for help is a sign of weakness and sometimes convince ourselves we are the ONLY ones who can do it.

Myth 3: “I’ll find the time later.”

It’s easy to push off important matters (often our own needs and wants).

**Remember...we ultimately manage stress by taking care of our own needs and focusing on what’s important to US!**

# More tips/techniques to Manage Stress

## The Basics

Getting enough sleep, exercising and a healthy diet go a long way in dealing with stress and overload.

## Relaxation and Meditation

Deep breathing, meditation and visualization work for many.

## Bring fun and pleasure into your life

Listen to music you enjoy

Spend a few minutes on your favorite hobby

Read a magazine article or the comics

Step outside for a few minutes of fresh air

# Dealing with Overload at Work

## Keep track of your workload

Keep a log of the time you spend on each of your work related tasks for a week (at work and at home)

## Talk to your manager

Schedule a meeting to discuss workload.

## Get organized!

Keep your desk clear of all but current projects and items you use on daily.

Clean out files/shelves/drawers regularly.

Keep a file of frequently used numbers/log ins, etc.

Keep your workplace supplied.

# Stress – When to get help

**Remember:** These signs and symptoms are usually normal reactions to abnormal situations. Over time, these symptoms will slowly go away

## **Seek Help If the Symptoms:**

Interfere with normal duties and/or daily living and continue for more than 6 to 8 weeks.

Involve dangerous behavior, i.e., thoughts of hurting self or others, reckless drinking, drug use, family violence, etc.

# 2. Take Control

## Changing Your Mindset

What do you want more time for? What's important to you?

## Setting goals based on what's important and realistic

Make your goals SMART: Specific, measurable, action-oriented realistic and time limited

## Letting go of the things you can't control

The courage to change what I can, strength to accept what I can't and the wisdom to tell the difference.

# 3. Prioritize

Develop a calendar system that works for you

Experiment with different systems until you find the right one

Keep two to-do lists, work and home

Keep separate lists in same notebook to avoid overlap

Arrange your to-do lists by priority

Most critical things on top

Review your lists at the beginning of each week

Make updates when necessary

Spend first or last of day making a prioritized to do list

Distinguish urgent tasks from those that are lower priority

# 4. Set Limits

## Saying No

Don't automatically say "yes."

Take time to consider the request.

Be honest, direct and firm.

Avoid saying maybe just to put off saying No.

Make your position clear.

Be brief.

The longer you talk the more you open yourself up . Develop an exit strategy.

Use non-verbal language.

# 4. Set Limits

## Setting Boundaries

Find ways to separate from work at the end of the day.

Listen to favorite music on the way home.

Avoid making work calls during commute.

Change clothes/take a short rest when you get home.

Set clear duty times.

Avoid answering non emergent calls after work hours.

Don't check email or voice mail when you're not working.

Set boundaries with friends and family when you need to.

# 5. Get Organized

Sort papers as soon as they come in the door.

Open mail every day over the trash or recycling bin.

Give each person a basket or folder for their mail.

Get rid of newspapers/magazines when the newest issues arrives.

Reduce clutter.

Tackle clutter one room at a time.

Get rid of items you don't use anymore.

Spend ten minutes every evening doing a "clutter" sweep.

Designate a basket or bin for the small items that accumulate through the day.



## 5. Get Organized

### Give everything a home.

Place a bin by the main door for outgoing items.

Hang hooks near the entrance of your home.

Store things where they are primarily used.

Store like things together.

Find ways to use “dead” space.

### Keep important information in an accessible place.

Create a central messaging area.

Build a list of contacts.

Create folders for important documents.

Photocopy important items in your wallet.

Program frequently used numbers.

# Overcoming Procrastination

We often procrastinate for emotional and irrational reasons!

Focus on positive outcomes as a way of getting past unpleasant tasks.

Build in rewards.

Work with the information you have.

Approach the hardest problems when you have the most energy.

Make big tasks more manageable by dividing them into smaller parts.

Do a task with someone else.

Delegate a task when possible and appropriate.

Wait it out – when appropriate lower the task on your priority list.

Don't do it all if it's unnecessary.

# 6. Make Time for Yourself

Start by thinking what makes you happy.

Schedule it!

Remember the importance of unstructured down time.

Communicate your needs to your family.

Reduce outside commitments.

Take a vacation day for yourself.

Use weekends wisely.

# 7. Connect with Friends and Family

Carve out uninterrupted family time.

Build couple time into schedule.

Share a hobby with a family member/friend.

Maintain friendships.

Stay connected with long distance loved ones.



## 8. Manage Information Overload

**Stick to your priorities.**

**Minimize distractions.**

Set your phone to voice mail.

Communicate your need for undisturbed time.

Bring your work to a secluded spot.

Protect your time.

**Disconnect every day.**

**Reduce the amount of incoming information.**

Cancel subscriptions to things you don't read.

Avoid giving email or phone numbers to retailers.

Recycle and shred

**Organize your computer.**

Utilize folders

Use disks for storage.

# 9. Be Healthy

Exercise

Sleep

Diet

Getting Help

# 10. Practice Being Resilient

Ways to become more resilient

Maintain a sense of perspective.

Ask yourself “How big is this problem really?”

Recognize that you have a choice in how you handle challenges.

You can't control what happens to you but you can control your response.

Accept Change.

Anticipate Challenges.

Learn how to calm yourself.

Overcome your fear.

Let go of your anger.

Take Action

Laugh

Focus on the good things.

# Contact information

Family Advocacy Program

[shari.hutchinson.ctr@dla.mil](mailto:shari.hutchinson.ctr@dla.mil)

Employee Assistance Program

[drew.henderson@dla.mil](mailto:drew.henderson@dla.mil)

DLA Life Connections

[worklife4you.com](http://worklife4you.com)

<http://www.teamhealth.com/wellness/mentalhealthmatters/overcomeoverload.pdf>