

DISTRRACT ASSESSMENT

The goal is to generate a list of twenty to thirty activities, both large and small, that you can do at different times to take you away from immediate stress, even if it's for brief moments. Circle the examples that you find distracting and brainstorm to add your own activities to the list. Aim to generate a minimum of five possibilities for each number in the assessment.

1. What types of activity do **you find absorbing**?

Sports: type _____ reading gardening
cooking chores: cleaning, washing the car, mowing the lawn, ironing,
organizing, laundry, washing dishes, other _____,
woodworking photography building models scrapbooking walking
hiking decorating singing playing an instrument spending time with
friends spending time on the internet using email knitting self
care: painting your nails, curling your hair, other: _____,

Other:

2. What **draws you out** of your own problems? How can you contribute to others or to the world?

help a child with homework unexpectedly vacuum the house ask a friend
about his or her concerns volunteer go to a pet shelter and walk the dogs
recycle or do a charity walk for a favorite cause

Other:

3. What can you do that leaves you **feeling neutral or the opposite of stressed-out**? Are there activities that trigger emotions that are inconsistent with stress, such as happiness, joy, or contentment?

watch funny movies follow a TV series solve Sudoku play cards do
crossword puzzles listen to 80's music go to a museum

Other:

4. What can you do to **give yourself a small physical jolt**? Sometimes when we're stuck in our thoughts, we need a physical shake to get off the stress track and onto a new one.

spice your burgers with hot chili peppers jump in a cold pool rub ice on your neck and wrists take a hot (but not too hot) shower go water skiing take trapeze lessons ride a roller coaster

Other:

5. Can you **compare yourself** to people who are worse off than you? It may sound odd, but when you're under stress and feeling like you can barely handle life right now, it can be helpful to compare yourself to people who are obviously worse off than you. Notice those who are worse off than you and generate a list of aspects of your life for which you are grateful.

Aspects of your life for which you are grateful:

6. How can you **leave a disturbing situation** mentally?

visualize a wall between yourself and the situation physically walk away from the situation create blocks of time in which you will not focus on the situation, such as during your morning routine, during meals, or in the evenings
imagine putting the situation in a box, closing it, and putting it away safely for some later time

Other:

Once you've generated your list, make a point of engaging in at least one of these distracting activities a day. When you notice your stress level getting high, use the activities on this list to give yourself a break.