



Discover Your Inner Strength for Handling Stress

發掘應付壓力的內在能力

by Amy Choi

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Stress is anything that causes our body to change or adapt - for good or bad. Stress is not simply emotional, for example, the anxiety experienced prior to taking up a new job or a new responsibility. It can also be structural, such as strained lower back muscles due to prolonged sitting in a chair; biochemical, for example, being unable to sleep due to the intake of too much coffee or tea; environmental, noise from a busy office or poorly-ventilated meeting room, for example; and behavioural, not getting adequate rest, or perfectionism.

Below are four ways in which people normally use to manage stress in their lives.

1. Remove the stressor

Your existing job stresses you out, so you find a new one.

2. Remove yourself from the stressor

Take a vacation, so you can stay away from your job, albeit temporarily.

3. Modify the stressor

You manage to make your job more pleasant by keeping a stereo

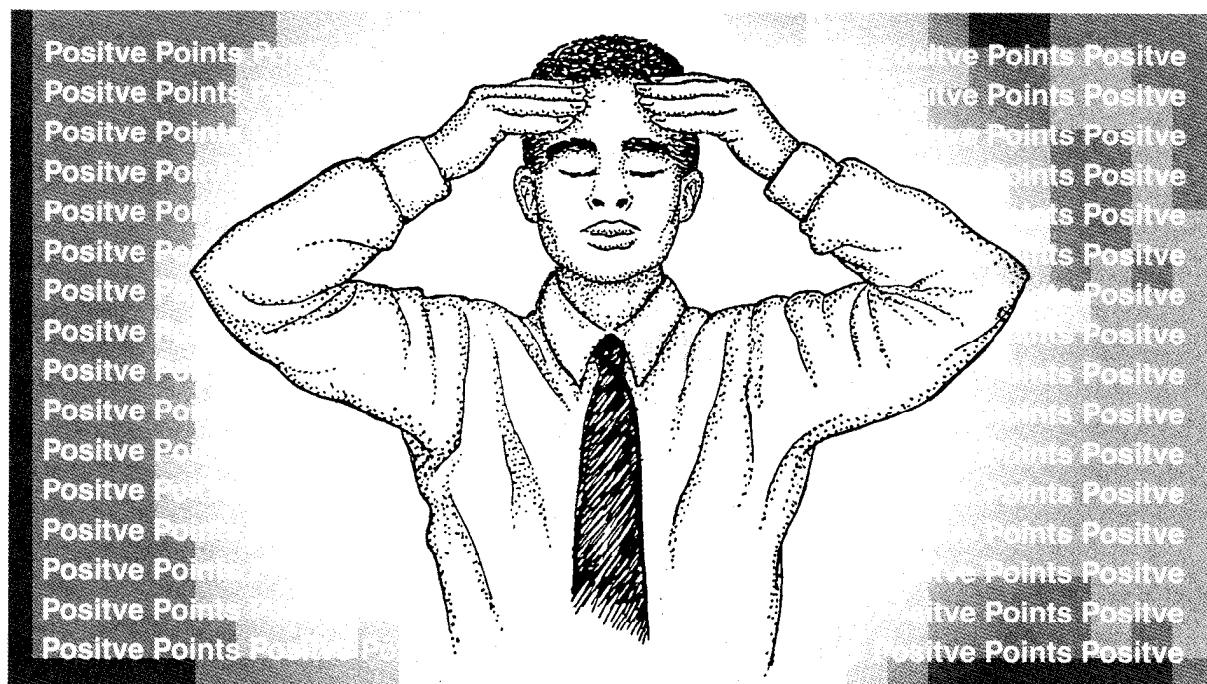
set at your office and listening to relaxing music when you are stressed out.

4. Re-programme your mind or body reaction

You change the way you think or feel about your job and thereby alter the ways your mind or body reacts to it, so your "stress button" is not pushed every time you go to work.

The re-programming approach is what this short article will focus on. This approach is most appropriate when dealing with emotional or mental stress, but is also helpful in other cases. It does not require a change of environment - only a change of your "software". To unhook from the emotional and physiological reactions caused by stressful situations, you only need to learn to use the tools that allow you to react to the same situations differently.

There are many such tools for re-programming - either through working on your mind, your body, or both. Here is a simple, easy-to-learn self-help technique that works with both dimensions very effectively. It is known as "The Positive Points".





You can do it:

- When overwhelmed;
- When under mental or emotional stress;
- To alleviate fears and phobias;
- For insomnia or after waking from a nightmare;
- For physical or emotional trauma; and
- When experiencing a mental block (cannot think clearly) during an examination or meeting.

The procedures are as follows. Put both of your index and middle fingertips on your forehead midway between the eyebrows and the hairline. Search around until you can feel a light pulse under the fingertips. While holding the points, relax and take slow, deep abdominal breaths. Review the stressful situation either mentally or verbally or both, and pay attention to what you see, hear, feel and think. Simply notice what is present rather than reacting to it. Work till the pulses synchronize, or when there is a deep sigh.

During the process, some people may have "involuntary" body movements like head circling or body swaying. Just stay with the experience. Stay calm and let the body do whatever it takes to release the stress.

This posture short-circuits the classic fight-or-flight response, which includes racing adrenals, depression of the immune system and the "disintegration" of the brain (triggered by blood going to the back brain). It stimulates blood flow back to the frontal lobes of the brain, where action, choice, new options and creativity are activated and exercised.

You can perform the procedure yourself, though the effect is more noticeable when another person works on you.

Experiment with this process today and lead a more relaxed life. ☺

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力是任何使身體作出轉變或調節的事物。它的性質並不單是情緒性，例如擔任新職前的緊張，亦可以是身體結構性的，例如長時間坐著會使下背的肌肉緊張；生化性的，例如因喝過量咖啡或茶而失眠；環境性的，例如辦公地點太嘈吵，會議室空氣不流通等；甚至行為性的，例如睡眠不足，或事事要求完美。

面對壓力可有以下四種方法：

一、 除去壓力成因

現時的工作給你很大壓力，你轉幹別的工作。

二、 使自己離開壓力的源頭

休假並暫時放下工作。

三、 改變引致壓力的原因

在辦公室擺放錄音機，並在感到有壓力時聽聽輕鬆的音樂，從而減壓。

四、 調整你的想法和身體反應

改變自己對工作的想法和感受，從而令自己的思想和身體的反應改變，令每天上班都不會感到有壓力。

本文主要討論調整想法和身體反應這些方法。這些方法對處理情緒或精神壓力最有效，對處理其他壓力亦有幫助。它並不需要改變環境——只需要改變自己的「軟件」。要幫助自己脫離因壓力而引致的情緒或生理反應，只需學習如何改變對事情的一貫反應方法。

有不少方法可以幫助我們調整反應——有些針對思想，有些針對身體，又或者兩者兼顧。以下是一個簡單易學的方法，對調整身心兩方面都有幫助。這個方法叫做「正面情緒觸點」。

你可以在下列情況應用「正面情緒觸點」：

- 受到情緒困擾
- 面對情緒或精神壓力
- 感到恐懼
- 失眠或從惡夢驚醒
- 經歷身體或情緒創傷
- 在考試或開會期間感到腦筋閉塞（不能思想）

步驟如下：把雙手的食指和中指指尖放在眼眉和髮線中間的位置，慢慢摸索，直至指尖感到輕微的脈搏。把手停在這個位置上，一邊慢慢作腹式深呼吸。回憶或說出（或者同時這樣做）令你感到有壓力的情況，留意自己看到和聽到什麼，有何感覺和想法。只須留心想，不用作出反應。繼續想，直至脈搏協調，或者長長呼出一口氣。

在進行期間，有些人會有一些「非自發」的動作，例如搖頭或擺動身體。保持平靜，讓身體自然地反應，從而消除壓力。

這個姿勢可以幫助阻止我們身體出現面對壓力時所產生的「戰或逃」反應：包括腎上腺素增加、免疫系統受擾亂、思想「散亂」（因為血液聚往腦的後部）。它刺激血液流回前腦，這個部分主管行動、抉擇及新意念的產生。你可自行應用這個方法，但如讓另一個人替你做，效果會更顯著。

今天便試試這個方法，讓自己的壓力減輕。☺

(蔡慧明女士是明燦顧問公司的顧問。)