

# Four great tips for handling stress

---

A new approach to stress, from Positive Psychologist Karen Reivich Ph.D., is shedding light on how we can all deal with life's obstacles. Her tips for handling whatever comes your way.

## Get perspective

"Most of us focus on the worst-case outcome in almost every situation," says Reivich. You don't need to shoo away those thoughts; instead, take a look at their opposite.

Jot down the worst-case scenarios first, then the best-case scenarios; writing sharpens thinking and can jolt you out of a negative spiral. Then you can begin looking honestly at the most likely outcomes, which will probably be somewhere in the middle.

## Don't wait for the sword to drop

"The best way to undercut anxiety is to take purposeful action," Reivich says. Heard rumours about layoffs at work? Schedule a meeting with your boss about your company's—and your own—prospects in 2010. If the meeting is disquieting, start putting together an updated résumé and cover letter.

## Look for joy

"It's hard to talk about this without sounding glib," Reivich says, "but there is a large body of research showing that people who cultivate positive emotion generally deal much better with adversity." Look for—and highlight—one small, good moment in your day. "Joy and gratitude can help inoculate you against the paralyzing effects of anxiety."

## Pool your resources

Just as no problem is created solely by you, neither is any solution.

"Identify your strengths and make a list of them," Reivich says. Then list the strengths of those you rely on. Now combine them.

"When you can draw from your own strengths as well as those of the people around you, you're looking at a very powerful package."