

M2 Be A Stress Master Series: Week 3

The adage is simple – “Stress Less by Doing Less.” How is that possible when we live in a culture that believes doing more is a badge of honor and doing more than one thing at a time will win you a medal of achievement? Start to notice how often we begin conversations with “I’m so busy” which contains a subtle mix of pride and self-pity.

Multitasking is a habit that doesn’t serve our emotional, mental or physical well-being, nor is beneficial for business and relationships. Here are some tips and tools for retraining our brain and body to do less, accomplish more AND lessen our stress response, reserving it for true threats.

SCATTERED ATTENTION

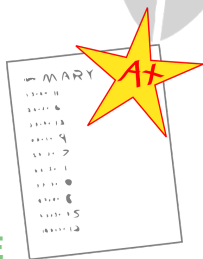
- Frequent interruptions increase chances of operating in crisis mode.
- 40% of knowledge workers never get more than 30 minutes of straight focus time.
- 11% decrease in test scores when multi-tasking present.
- Multi-tasking negatively affects our relationships.
- Split attention increases stress and decreases productivity.

TECH INFLUENCE

- Teens – average 7 hours and 22 minutes per day on phone
- Tweens (8-12) – average 4 hours and 44 minutes per day on phone
- Microsoft employees switch applications 566 times per day on average
- 6 minutes of recovery time to get back on task after checking emails and texts
- Tech use is training us in continuous partial attention.

RETURN TO FOCUS

- Know the reality of where you are first.
 - Write a detailed list of what you do in a given day. Include all aspects of personal care, meal prep, car time commuting and shuttling, media and tech time, work, hobbies, etc. Leave out nothing.
- Reflect – Is this all possible in a 16-hour waking day? Am I multi-tasking to get it all done? Notice if a stress response surfaces just by reviewing your list.
- Refine – What are the non-negotiables? What can be eliminated, delegated, rescheduled?
- Remember to breathe.



WEEK 3 PRACTICE

Curb the multitasking habit.

- Experiment with doing only one cognitively challenging task at a time.

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- Set block time limits; for example: work 40 minutes; tech break 10 minutes; self-care break 10 minutes. Notice how you feel and how much you accomplish.
- Close all apps not associated with what you are working on.
- Place your phone on silence, work mode or keep it in a different room.
- When you must use a device try an app like “One Sec” that helps limit task switching.
- Remember to breathe.

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