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Advice from HeartMath® Stress Experts on How to Prevent (or Recover from) a Stress Meltdown

For many Americans the instability of the economy is feeling like an emotional roller coaster, triggering all kinds of emotions from blame and anger to fear and anxiety. While the current economic crisis can feel like a looming disaster waiting to drain the life out of your banking account, what’s worse, say [HeartMath](#) stress experts, is what could lie ahead. If people are unaware of how to handle today’s barrage of stress it will start to eat away at their vitality, health and well-being. Psychological stress symptoms can range from headaches and stomachaches to the aggravation of other health conditions such as hypertension, immune disorders and cardiovascular disease. HeartMath researchers have been studying the effects of stress and anxiety on health and performance for over seventeen years and are cautioning people about the risk of serious consequences that can arise simply from a lack of understanding about stress and how to deal with it effectively.

In 2006 the American Psychological Association conducted a survey which found that money is a top source of stress for adults. Without a doubt many Americans are consumed with concern about the potentially devastating effects if the economy doesn’t stabilize soon. The stark reality is that this kind of stress can take a serious toll on all aspects of our lives – our energy, our well-being, our decision-making skills, our relationships, even our financial health.

Psychologist Deborah Rozman, co-author of [*Transforming Stress: The HeartMath Solution for Relieving Worry, Fatigue, and Tension*](#), says, “The majority of people believe that emotions just happen to them. This lack of understanding of how to address emotions is the primary cause of today’s stress epidemic. Too much stress creates overload, our creativity and clarity decline, we can’t reason clearly or organize our thoughts well, we feel disconnected from ourselves. We start experiencing our stress overload as aches and pains, fragmented thinking, negative attitudes, and feeling out of control.”

The good news is that people have much more power over their emotional well-being than they give themselves credit for. “People just need a little direction on how to access that power. They just need to know how to do it,” says Rozman. “And HeartMath can show them how.”

Understanding the mechanics of stress gives you the advantage of being more aware of and sensitive to your own level of stress and knowing when and how to take proactive steps. This increased awareness also helps you to better care for your family, friends and colleagues. HeartMath’s experts say that many people are unaware of the following stress facts:

Fact #1: Your body doesn’t care if it’s a big stress or a little one.

The human body doesn’t discriminate between a BIG stress or a little one. Regardless of the significance, stress affects the body in predictable ways. A typical stress reaction, which most of us experience dozens of times each day, begins with a cascade of 1,400 biochemical events in your body. If these reactions are left unchecked we age prematurely, our cognitive function is impaired, our energy is drained, and we are robbed of our effectiveness and clarity.

Fact #2: Stress can make smart people do stupid things.

Stress causes what brain researchers call “cortical inhibition.” The phenomenon of cortical inhibition helps to explain why smart people do dumb things. Simply said, stress inhibits a small part of your brain and you can’t function at your best. When we are in coherence – a state where we are cognitively sharp, emotionally calm, and we feel and think with enhanced clarity – the brain, heart and nervous system are working in harmony.

This state of coherence facilitates our cognitive functioning – we are actually operating at peak performance mentally, emotionally and physically.

Fact #3: Many people are oblivious to their stress.

We can be physiologically experiencing stress yet mentally oblivious to it because we've become so accustomed to it. Some have become so adapted to the daily pressures, irritations and annoyances of life that it starts to seem normal. Yet the small stresses accumulate quickly and we may not realize how much they're impairing our mental and emotional clarity and our overall health until it shows up as a bad decision, an overreaction or an unwanted diagnosis at the doctor's office.

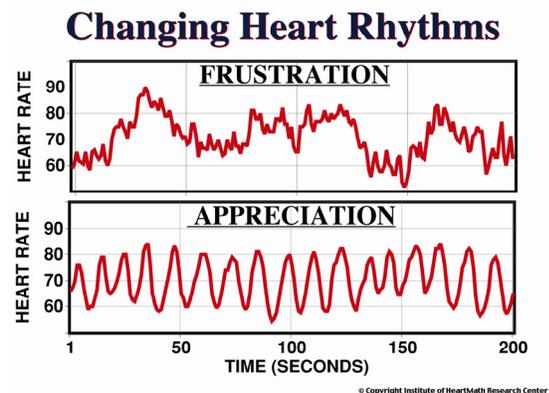
Fact #4: We can control how we respond to stress.

We don't need to be victims to our own emotions, thoughts and attitudes. We can control how we respond to stress and we can become more sensitive to stressful situations and how they are affecting us before it manifests as a physical, mental or emotional complaint. There are simple, scientifically validated solutions to stress that empower people to rewire their own stress response.

Fact #5: The best strategy is to handle stress in the moment.

The best way to manage stress is to deal with it the very moment you feel it come up. Millions of Americans unsuccessfully use the binge-and-purge approach when it comes to stress. They stress out all day, believing that they can wait until later to recover when they go to an evening yoga class, go to the gym or chill out when they take the weekend off. Unfortunately, when we put off going for our own inner balance our bodies have already activated the stress response and it's our health that suffers.

HeartMath's research shows how emotions change our heart rhythm patterns. Positive emotions create coherent heart rhythms, which look like rolling hills – it's a smooth and ordered pattern. In contrast, negative emotions create chaotic, erratic patterns. Using a [heart rhythm monitor](#), you can actually see your heart rhythms change in real time as you shift from stressful emotions like anger or anxiety to positive feelings like care or appreciation. Coherent heart rhythm patterns facilitate higher brain function, whereas negative emotions inhibit a person's ability to think clearly. Coherent heart rhythms also create a feeling of solidity and security.



One of HeartMath's most popular solutions for stress is their [emWave Personal Stress Reliever](#). This little mobile device helps you develop more awareness and teaches you how to shift out of stress in the moment. Dr. Rozman says, "You are literally learning to transform your stress into creative and productive energy. When we address stress in the moment, rather than waiting to deal with it later, we actually counteract the negative effects of stress. You can't be a victim of stress if you're being proactive about it in the moment."

HeartMath's approach to dealing with stress and anxiety empowers people with simple tools that show them how to engage the power of the heart to change their heart rhythm patterns and shift unwanted attitudes and emotional turbulence right in the moment.

Martha Beck, life coach, New York Times bestselling author and columnist for O, the Oprah Magazine, says, "I'm fanatically interested in new technologies that apply what scientists are learning about the brain. One of my very favorites is a device from HeartMath, called an 'emWave.' It gives me feedback about the electromagnetic resonance coming from my heart and brain – and while costing less than \$200, it does the job better than a 'brain mapping' procedure for which I gladly paid \$10,000. I use my emWave every day, and believe it's helping me become permanently calmer and more relaxed...by using the emWave PSR you learn to increase joyful feelings and minimize stress to live more from your Essential Self. I've been giving the emWave PSR to all my friends, life coaches and clients."

This approach has been adopted by some of the largest and most well-respected healthcare organizations around the world such as Duke Medicine, Stanford Hospital, Mayo Health System, BlueCross BlueShield, Sutter Health, Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine, and Kaiser Permanente.

HeartMath offers a number of ways to start reducing stress and anxiety through their free monthly [webinars and downloads](#) which delve into various areas such as the power of positive emotions, personal growth and empowerment, and how to effectively address stress, anxiety, sadness and depression. They also offer [HeartMath's Stress and Well-being Survey](#) – a free research-based personal assessment tool to help people with different aspects of their lives, such as work, relationships, finances, adaptability, resilience and emotional vitality, that are impacting their well-being.

HeartMath says that their approach gives people the power of choice. You can't avoid stress but you can choose how you want to process the stress that is happening around you.

About HeartMath®:

HeartMath LLC (www.heartmath.com) is a cutting-edge performance company providing a range of unique services, products, and technology to improve health and well-being, while dramatically reducing stress and boosting performance and productivity. For more than 17 years HeartMath clinical studies have demonstrated the critical link between emotions, heart function, and cognitive performance. HeartMath's compelling solutions for stress relief have been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals such as American Journal of Cardiology, Stress Medicine, Preventive Cardiology, Journal of the American College of Cardiology, Integrative Physiological and Behavioral Science and Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine. HeartMath's organizational clients include Duke Medicine, Stanford Business School, Stanford Hospital, Mayo Health System, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Sutter Health, Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine, BP, Cisco Systems, Redken, Kaiser Permanente, Boeing and the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, as well as dozens of school systems and thousands of health professionals around the world.