

Everyone experiences [stress](#) at some point. Whether it is work, family, or other responsibilities, we all have pressures that create stress in our lives. Being a small business owner, these are compounded by the stress of managing the business. As an entrepreneur, you are faced with issues daily, from operational to personnel issues and everything in between, - and now the uncertainty of COVID-19 added another factor to the stress. While [not all stress is bad](#), prolonged and sustained stress has negative effects on quality of life. The good news is that with awareness and healthy coping mechanisms, it is possible to manage stress. Read on to learn more on [stress management for small business owners](#).

## **Why Should You Care About Stress Management?**

The world of entrepreneurship and small business ownership comes with unique [challenges](#) and potential for high levels of stress. In fact, entrepreneurs are more likely than non-entrepreneurs to struggle with certain [mental health concerns](#), like depression and substance abuse. Small business owners also face additional difficulties achieving [work-life balance](#). When left unmanaged, this entrepreneurial stress can have detrimental impacts on both your health and your business. For example, research has shown that work-related stress [increases the risk of heart disease](#), among other health issues like [insomnia and high blood pressure](#). Beyond the mental and physical health impacts, small business owners simply must learn how to manage workplace stress to avoid [burnout](#). Once you reach a state of [burnout](#), your business success will suffer. So, what is a small biz owner to do?

## **Know Your Stress Symptoms and Triggers**

You may be surprised to learn that while everyone experiences stress, [stress manifests differently](#) for different people. That is, stress is a [subjective experience](#). Therefore, the prerequisite to managing your stress as a business owner is learning how to recognize your own individual [stress symptoms](#) - which can be physical, emotional, and behavioral - and recognize your main [stress triggers](#) - work-related and otherwise. For help with developing this self-awareness, Mental Health America has created a [stress screening quiz](#) you can use to better understand your relationship with stress. Another great self-evaluation tool is [the Stress Continuum](#), recommended [for entrepreneurs](#) by the small business mentorship nonprofit, [SCORE](#). Using these tools and approaches, you can build crucial self-knowledge that will help you develop your personalized stress-management strategy.

## **Starting Small**

Now that you know your stress symptoms and triggers, you are equipped to recognize when your stress is beginning to accumulate. You are empowered to intervene and course-correct

before your stress takes you and your business to a place you don't want to go. When getting started on feeling better, remember that Rome wasn't built in a day - and [neither was your small business](#). Similarly, it takes time to implement stress-management routines and habits in your life. For this reason, know it is okay to start small. There are plenty of beneficial self-care activities that take [five minutes or less](#), including [stress-releasing breathing techniques](#). The key is to tune in to your needs and then intentionally meet them. This can be as simple as drinking a glass of water if you're dehydrated. If you're particularly [stressed about the coronavirus](#), consider [reduce your intake of news](#). With these small acts of stress relieving self-care, you lay a foundation for effective stress management.

## **Building Habits for Stress Management**

With a solid foundation to keep you grounded, you are ready to start building a [stress management](#) strategy that works for you. This strategy should be comprised of healthy coping mechanisms that reduce your stress overall and improve your [stress response](#). Square one of your strategy might be learning to let go of the [mindset that you have to "do it all" by yourself](#). Discovering what works best for you will likely involve some trial and error, but there is no shortage of self-help resources to assist in this process. The following are some resources to help you on your wellness journey:

- [Work-Life Balance Tips for Entrepreneurs, From Entrepreneurs](#)
- [8 Ways to Avoid Burnout in Your Small Business](#)
- [16 Ways to Cope with Entrepreneurial Stress](#)
- [5 Tips to Help Small Business Owners Deal with Stress](#)
- [9 Self-Care Strategies for Busy Entrepreneurs](#)
- [Mindfulness meditation: A research-proven way to reduce stress](#)

While it is not possible to avoid the experience of stress altogether, with self-awareness and intentional action we can learn to better manage stress. At the end of the day, stress just comes with the territory of being an entrepreneur and small business owner. Thus, for small business owners, stress-management is all the more important. In order to take care of your employees and your customers, [you must first take care of yourself](#). With the right tools and techniques in your stress management strategy, you will find enhanced personal and professional success. Stay tuned to expand upon these skills to foster a culture of wellness for your employees.

## **Additional Small Business Resources**

Already in business or thinking about starting your own small business? Check out our

various small business resources:

- View our COVID-19 Resources here: [COVID-19 Small Business Resources](#) and [COVID-19 Industry Resources](#)
- View small business help topics here: [Small Business Information Center](#)
- View business reports here: [Small Business Snapshots](#)
- View industry-specific research here: [Market Research Links](#)

Remember, you can also receive **free professional business advice** and free or low-cost business training from your [local Small Business Development Center!](#)

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