

Strategy #16: Journaling and Relaxation

When you are stressed, you may have rapid thoughts jumping from one thing to another, or you may repeat a story/conversation/possible outcome over and over again. It can be helpful to slow down your thoughts by writing about them. You cannot write as fast as you can think.

You can add a relaxation practice to the process of writing down your thoughts, to help calm your body and your mind.

How to practice this strategy

- Set a timer on your smartphone or watch for 60 seconds.
- For 60 seconds, write down exactly what is running through your head, word for word.
- When the timer goes off, set it again.
- For 60 seconds, practice deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation.
- When the timer goes off, set it again.
- Return to writing for another 60 seconds.
- Repeat the writing/relaxation practice until you feel your stress reduce.

By getting your thoughts and emotions out on paper, you are helping to externalize your experience. By combining this process with relaxation, you will reduce your stress.

Begin this practice as soon as you notice your stress warning signs.