



MENTAL HEALTH

HOW NOT TO SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF

Sometimes the small daily stressors of life can feel like they are ganging up on you and you can begin to feel overwhelmed.

In these situations it really helps to focus on what is really important in life and prioritise these things over the smaller tasks that pull at you every day.

1. It's all mostly small stuff

In an article for Success.com, physical therapist Andrew Banh reveals that "excessive focus on small problems compounds a vicious cycle of fear, stress and worry."

Banh explains that life's challenges exist on a spectrum and that they should warrant our attention to different degrees.

In an article for Psychology Today, Karyn Hall, Ph.D. and founder of the Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Center in Houston, Texas, asks "Do you spend most of your time with what is important to you or what others want you to do?"

Clarity on what is important to you will help you know what warrants your attention.

2. Sweating the small stuff is really bad for you

According to a study conducted by Oregon State University (OSU), even small stressors can be bad for your health.

"It's not the number of hassles that does you in, it's the perception of them being a big deal that causes problems," says Carolyn Aldwin, director of the Center for Healthy Aging Research in the College of Public Health and Human Sciences at OSU.

"Taking things in stride may protect you", she suggests.

3. Tactics to turn down sweating the small stuff

-Get a good night's sleep. Lack of sleep can trigger stress. Avoid caffeine after noon and relax as much as possible after work to feel more refreshed and less likely to stress about insignificant things in the new day.

-Organise your life. Managing your workload better can help to reduce your stress. Plan your day and make lists of the things you hope to achieve to feel more like you're on top of it all.

-Don't let it get too much. Reach out if you need to. If the "small stuff" seems to be closing in on you, delegate where you can and communicate your situation with those around you. You'll be surprised by how many things are not really as urgent as you thought they were.

A life without stress is impossible, but a certain amount of stress is actually good for you. Rather than striving for no stress, it may be more beneficial to strive for healthier responses to stress.