

## Use Anticipatory Joy to Manage Work Stress



When you have something to look forward to in the future, this can create a positive emotional state to help you manage stress better. Biology drives this stress management technique known as “anticipatory joy” or “positive anticipation.”

The anticipation of an enjoyable experience releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter that produces a sense of pleasure. This uplifts your mood and counteracts stress hormones.

Try this: Focus on what you are looking forward to or plan something that will bring joy. See what happens to your mood! This strategy may shift your attention away from stressors and generate a positive state of mind. The payoffs are reduced anxiety, improved mood, increased motivation, and a sense of purpose.

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## Avoid the Stress of Last-Minute Income Tax Preparation

You can avoid the stress of last-minute tax preparation stress by dedicating time early each new year to organize your tax documents. Create a paper and electronic file. You may need both as some paperwork may be hard copy and some you can save electronically. Here are some steps to help you work through organizing your process. Each step takes just a few minutes so by the time you are ready to file you will have what you need organized.

1. Make a checklist of what you will be expected to have by the time you file. (There are different distribution timelines for banks, investment companies etc.)
2. Begin to watch for statements to arrive online or in the mail and file them. Most institutions will let you know by email or on their website when to expect your statements.
3. Contact your financial advisor or tax advisor to discuss any tax-reduction options you may be able to take advantage of for the tax year.
4. Once you receive all statements you need you can schedule your tax appt or begin your taxes yourself.

**Additional Tips:** File electronically and have your refund or payment completed electronically, it will speed up the full circle process. If you are receiving a refund, you may get it quickly by using the electronic method. If you need to pay you are not required to pay until the tax deadline date. Most importantly, keep this article for next year! For more information and tips see:

[IRS tax tips](#)

## Best Way to Utilize a To-Do List

To improve the effectiveness of to-do lists, consider these tips.

- 1) Write down all tasks as you think of them. Do not make your to-do list too long. If one glance at the list causes you to feel overwhelmed, that will defeat the purpose of the list.
- 2) Add deadlines to each item or prioritize them by number if deadlines are not required.
- 3) Pick one or two or more tasks if you can for each day. Do not expect to accomplish more than you have energy or time for. Be realistic and know things will get done if you use your checklist.
- 4) Reward yourself for a job well done by checking off your tasks and taking a mental or coffee break!
- 5) Keep the list going and make it a part of each day. This can be a stress reliever because you will not have to keep remembering what needs to be done. Good Luck!

For more ideas go to: [Powerful types of checklists](#)

## Mindfulness Everyday

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to your thoughts, feelings, body sensations, and what's going on around you. It is being fully present in the moment without distractions. This reduces tension and can revitalize you during the workday. There is nothing special required to practice mindfulness.

Examples of daily mindfulness practices:

- 1) Deep breathing: Focus only on your breath, inhale slowly, hold your breath for a few seconds, and exhale slowly. Repeating the process produces calmness.
- 2) Take a short walk outside and focus only on the sensations of walking, your feet on the ground, and the movement of your body.
- 3) Find a window and look out. What do you see? Focus on a couple things (a tree, a parked car, a bird, etc.) Avoid labeling and categorizing what you see outside the window; instead of thinking "bird" or "car," try to notice the colors, the patterns, or the textures. Think about those colors, patterns or textures and how they are formed to be the object you are looking at. Do this for a few minutes to clear your mind and be back in the moment.
- 4) Learn more here: [Mindfulness techniques](#)