

## EXERCISE HELPS WITH THE STRESS OF JOB SEARCH



There is nothing more stressful than the day-to-day grind of a job--except maybe the stress that comes from losing it.

Today's turbulent economy has increased the chance of losing a job. Millions of people are experiencing the weight of job loss. This doesn't even include the anxiety of waiting for the axe to fall--whether real or perceived.

Many Americans are suffering from stress related to job loss, so what can they do to help them cope with the situation? Well, how about hitting the gym? Job loss ranks high on the list of major stress-causing life events, such as divorce, death in the family, etc. Given the uncertainty in today's job market, there is increased stress, not only for those who have been laid off, but for those who may be potentially laid off and who are uncertain about the future.

### Fight or Flight?

Under emotional or physical stress, the body produces a variety of hormones and adrenaline. This production of powerful hormones is needed to meet "fight or flight" responses. In modern society, we need neither to run from a chasing tiger nor fight our mind's demons in hand-to-hand combat, yet the body still produces these chemicals as if we did. The long-term effect of this chemical production is detrimental, impacting the immune system and making individuals more sensitive to stress, anxiety, illness and pain. If not expended, as they should be, they will remain in our system and become toxic. One of the best ways to expend various stress hormones is to exercise.

Exercise can help fight stress and the harmful effect of stress on the body. In addition, exercise makes your body stronger and raises levels of good chemicals in the brain that enable you to release pent-up stress and better cope with tension that is ongoing, such as looking for work and figuring out how to pay bills.

### Keep Moving

A good way to combat stress is to exercise, especially if it keeps you in a routine. Combine this with good nutrition to stay or become healthy.

Get up every morning, take a shower, get dressed, eat breakfast, go for a walk or to the gym, and 'go to work,'" he suggests. "Going to work may mean leaving the house and working for one or two hours in the library. But just getting out of the house helps. It's awfully easy to get discouraged and to let other demands whittle away at your time.

But keep in mind, severe stress may need more than a run in the park.

Exercise and nutrition can be beneficial and serve as a distraction. But sometimes a person's whole identity can be tied to their job and increase the degree of stress from a job loss. No generic prescription can cover everyone's needs. In serious cases, a person may need more help with coping skills from medication, support groups and therapy.

Losing a job--or just waiting to lose one--can be quite stressful, so take the time to take care of yourself first by exercising and eating right, so you can beat stress before it beats you. Some final stress-busters:

- Walking
- Cycling
- Swimming
- Playing sports
- Gardening
- Dancing
- Lifting weights
- Napping
- Taking a warm bath or shower
- Getting a massage
- Talking over your troubles with friends or professionals
- Doing yoga
- Using acupuncture
- Meditating
- Eliminating caffeine
- Reducing sugar intake
- Taking multivitamins, especially those high in vitamin B complexes
- Eating healthier, natural foods
- Drinking warm herbal teas