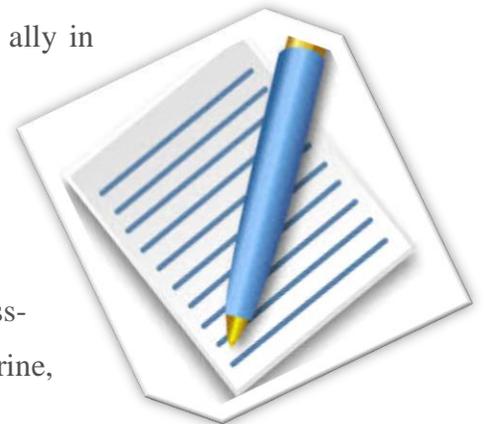


## HOW TO TAME SERIOUS STRESS

Every day of our lives we face events that cause us stress. Although many of these events are minor in the grand scheme of things, there are situations that clearly can be considered major sources of stress -- such as an impending marriage or divorce, or trouble at home or work.

**When you're faced with a highly stressful event in your life, the following strategies will help you cope.**

- **Keep your mind in the present.** In times of stress, the mind can make things appear worse than they are by creating versions of impending disaster. Because the body can't tell the difference between fact and fantasy, it reacts with a heightened physical response. You can calm both your mind and your body by keeping your mind in the present. To keep your mind in the present, center your attention on breathing, a sound or visual pattern, a repetitive movement or meditation.
- **Take inventory of your coping responses.** Confidence is a valuable ally in combating stress, and it builds on memories of past successes. Review successes you've had with other stressful life situations to recall some of the specific things you did to cope.
- **Develop a plan and take action.** Commit yourself to a reasonable course of action to deal with the causes of your stress. Action is a powerful stress-reducer. Research shows that the body lowers its production of epinephrine, a powerful stress hormone, when a person shifts into action.
- **Take time out to relax.** At least once or twice a day, take time to decompress by relaxing -- perhaps by listening to soothing music, taking a walk, gardening, reading or exercising. You could also choose to perform a more formal relaxation technique such as deep breathing or meditation.
- **Contact your EAP:** If you find that the stress still feels insurmountable, rely on the assistance of ERC. Call to schedule an appointment with an ERC clinician to help build stress coping skills and address the things that are keeping you stuck in your stress.



### HOW TO USE YOUR EAP:

**ERC** is your company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). For additional information, visit our website [www.ERCincorp.com](http://www.ERCincorp.com) or simply call 1-800-222-8590.