

# Dealing with stress, coping skills, and how to improve mood

Post by “Kalosyni” of March 4, 2025 at 11:02 AM

I came across these two articles which talk about 8 aspects of coping, and there are some elements which overlap with Epicurean ideas: pleasures and savoring, memory of pleasant experiences & past pleasures, and self-sufficiency (goal setting and accomplishment).

<https://www.npr.org/2025/03/04/nx-s1-5316220/blah-buoyant-skills-improve-mood-optimism-stress-reduction>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2024/09/27/nx-s1-5082364/anxiety-stress-positive-coping-class-skills>

## Quote

Here’s a quick summary of the skills taught in the course:

### 1. Positive events

We tend to fixate on the negative. So, try this: Switch your focus to something good today. It could be a beautiful sky, a delicious bite of fresh fruit, or a call from a friend.

Moskowitz is a coffee lover, so she suggests taking time to really enjoy that morning ritual, noticing the aroma and the feel of the warm mug.

When you pay attention to small pleasures, you may feel a shift to a sense of calm or comfort.

This is a simple concept, but it goes against our natural instincts. Humans evolved to pay attention to threats and problems. “That’s adaptive,” Moskowitz says. But don’t miss out on the good.

### 2. Savoring

Now that you’ve noticed a beautiful sky or delicious scent, take time to savor it. The goal here is to make the moment last. Say you’ve got great photos from a vacation or celebration, each time you look at them, you can re-experience positive feelings.

“Think of it as getting another hit of positive emotion,” Moskowitz says. You can savor a moment by simply remembering it, or you can write it down or tell someone else about

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4326-dealing-with-stress-coping-skills-and-how-to-improve-mood/?postID=34326#post34326>

it. This can amplify the positive feelings and give you an emotional buffer when stress and anxiety rise.

### **3. Gratitude**

This one can feel like a platitude. I get it! But before you brush it aside, there's a lot of research on the benefits. For instance, [a recent study](#) among women points to a potential longevity boost from feelings of gratefulness.

So, you can ask yourself this: If I had a list of all the things I'm grateful for, would it be long? Think of all the people, events and experiences that bring you joy. At first you may only think of a few obvious ones, but with practice your list can grow longer, as you notice more small things that enrich your life, Moskowitz says.

### **4. Daily mindfulness**

You've likely heard this one before: To feel calmer, tune in to your experience in the present moment, instead of getting caught up in your thoughts. But you won't see the benefit unless you actually take the time to practice it. One way is to focus on your breath. It's a shortcut to get rid of the clutter in your mind. To try it, find a quiet spot and take some slow breaths. As you inhale, let your belly expand. Make your exhales slow, about twice as long. Notice the way your breath feels in your belly as it rises and falls.

### **5. Positive reappraisal**

When something unfortunate or unexpected happens, can you find a silver lining? It's a familiar concept, but Moskowitz says it can pay off. One refrain she uses in her own life when something bad happens is "It could have been much worse."

Try it next time you have an annoying experience — say, you take your car in for repairs, and it's not ready on time. Instead of getting mad, could you use the time to take that walk you've been meaning to get in? Or treat yourself to some quiet time? It's not possible to do this in every situation, but it's a good way to gain perspective amid everyday challenges, like losing your keys or missing the bus.

### **6. Self-compassion**

Are you your biggest critic? If your self-talk is negative, that's a good clue. Many of us "hold ourselves to a very high standard that we would never expect of anyone else," Moskowitz says. So, now's the time to take the compassion you'd show to a friend and turn it on yourself. There are easy ways to try this. Take the time to do things that

make you feel good, for example, or take a lunch break when you're hungry instead of putting it off. You can even try giving yourself a gentle hug now and then.

## **7. Personal strengths**

In the midst of challenges and struggles, we can forget what we're good at. So, the course offers up a technique to recognize your strengths and take stock. Are you a good listener? Empathetic? Are you great at managing details? Knowing your strengths helps you stand strong amid challenges.

## **8. Attainable goals**

If you know your strengths, it may make it easier to set goals that align with them. "The research on goal attainment shows that any progress toward a goal increases your positive emotion," Moskowitz says. So, it's worth pulling out a notebook and writing down some goals. "I find it extremely rewarding to cross something off my list," says Moskowitz.

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