

Managing stress is essential for maintaining balance and well-being, especially when juggling multiple responsibilities. Below is a condensed guide to the practical strategies outlined by Dr. Meg Arroll in her *Tiny Traumas* book based on the AAA (Awareness, Acceptance, Action) approach.

TIP: Place this guide on your desk or in places where you tend to feel stressed the most.

STEP 1: AWARENESS

Recognize presence of stress

Pay attention to how you feel when stress arises. For example, how does your body react when you're faced with multiple unread emails?

Identify physical sensations

Notice where stress shows up in your body (e.g., tight shoulders, racing heart, shallow breathing).

Observe your thoughts

What unhelpful thought patterns come up when you face overwhelming responsibilities?

STEP 2: ACCEPTANCE

Notice

- Sit still or stand comfortably.
- Check in with your physical position: Where are you? How does your body feel?
- Pay attention to your surroundings and stay in the present moment.

Sit with discomfort

- Acknowledge and describe any physical sensations or unhelpful thoughts.
- Allow discomfort to be interesting. Stay curious without trying to fix it immediately.
- If the discomfort feels intense, focus on your breathing.

Appreciate your body

- Recognize that your body is working hard to protect you even when it feels uncomfortable.
- Thank your body, mind, and spirit for their efforts to protect you.

Reassurance

- Once you've sat with the discomfort, reassure your body that you have the tools and support you need to handle the situation.

STEP 3: ACTION | Immediate Relief Techniques

Five Senses Ritual

Pause and ground yourself by noticing five things you see, four things you feel, three things you hear, two things you smell, and one thing you taste.

Soften Your Vision

Close your eyes briefly, then open them and allow your peripheral vision to soften.

Chewing

Chewing gum or having a small snack can reduce stress and lower cortisol levels, helping you feel more relaxed.

Yawning

Yawning naturally triggers your parasympathetic nervous system, helping to counterbalance stress.