

# FAQ

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



WEBINAR

## Life Hacks and Self Care

The best way to create balance for your team is to start with yourself.

When your body language and demeanour convey the right energy, the people around you also benefit. Conversely, if you are reacting negatively to stress, you are likely to be unapproachable and even inflammatory in your behaviour, effectively putting the team out of balance. Hence the emphasis on self care.

When you are calm and settled, you are more prepared to notice and address what's going on with other members of your team. Work through the tips listed below and find what works best for you. This way you will be able to offer support for others with the confidence of personal experience.

As an effective supervisor / manager / practitioner, you need to invite your team members – and indeed your patients - to talk through their problems with you in a safe and non-judgmental environment. You can show you are actively listening by repeating their key points back to them and making eye contact. Your goal should be to project empathy. A helpful tool for this is to validate them with real praise.

### What are the best ways to manage stress?

The way we connect with our physical and emotional self determines our ability to manage stress. Below are tips for you to try:

#### Self Assessment and having a self care plan:

The first step in fixing a problem is recognising it exists. The [self-assessment chart](#) is designed to help you identify how you are tracking, and what you might be lacking, in terms of your self-care. This is a key tool for you and everyone in your team. From self assessment, and the list below, you can then develop your own action plan.

#### Open yourself up to the good:

As human beings we are wired to fixate on 'the bad' (negative small or large niggles in a day for eg) and overlook 'the good' (what has gone well, happy moments for eg) in our lives. Challenge your way of thinking. Actively look for the good and give a clearer perspective to the bad in what you hear, in the way you perceive others, and what you believe about yourself. You can start by cataloguing at least 5 good things about the day that's just finished both at work and in your personal life. By doing this as a conscious daily habit, it can soon become a reflexive coping mechanism.

#### Posture:

Confidence is a physical and emotional expression. By standing in a power pose – think Wonder Woman or Superman. Stand with hands on hips and feet planted hip width apart, standing tall and lifted in the chest and shoulders back. By giving attention to this posture for three minutes, you will likely feel more confident. It will give you the emotional tone needed to tackle a problematic interaction, a nagging issue, or just the day ahead.

#### Nature:

Taking a walk in nature helps us rest our minds. When this isn't practical, try bringing nature into your environment to help you recalibrate. A potted plant, a vase filled with cut flowers, screen savers and photos of trees or waterways / ocean can all play a part in elevating your mood.

#### 5-4-3-2-1... Just do it:

The worst kind of stress is the type we create for ourselves. Fear of doing something that's less than perfect can stop us from doing it, and avoidance of doing something we need to do gives that thing power over us. There are two key approaches to managing procrastination/perfection stress. One is the Pareto Principle, which offers the 80/20 rule that guides us away from the goal of maximum input to make every little thing 100% perfect, proposing 20% effort to gain 80% result. The second approach is simply to count backwards from 5 to 1 and JUST DO IT.

#### Re-balance through breathing:

Considerable scientific evidence points to breathing as a tool for lowering stress and anxiety, and enhancing calmness and well-being, emotional stability, focus, ability to manage pain and to self-regulate.

Start by closing your eyes if possible. Centre your attention around the heart/chest. Imagine your breath is flowing in and out of that area. Breathe a little slower and deeper than you usually would, using a rhythm such as inhaling for 5 counts then exhaling for 5 counts. While doing this, invoke a positive daydream. Continue for a full 3 minutes, and repeat as often as necessary throughout your day.

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### How do I manage a super-confident registrar?

Talk to the registrar about how the best GPs don't actually know everything. Help them understand that they have a part to play in creating and maintaining a balanced team, and explain the value of the 80/20 rule to that end.

### How do I listen first, before responding, and not have preconceived ideas with respect to a situation?

Being aware that you might have a tendency to jump to conclusions, cut others short and not actively listen is really helpful. We often do these things out of habit, frustration due to time constraints, or because of stress generally.

Try breathing through the impulse to react, and pushing your index finger into your thumb as a reminder to listen. Some people use a rubber band on their wrist and snap it rather than snapping at someone else.

### How do I cope when I'm too exhausted to take on other people's issues... but everything is needed NOW?

Try letting these people know you are doing your best with available resources. Ask them to double-check what can wait and seek help from others on your team where possible. In order to get through the immediate situation, employ the techniques suggested [here](#) – especially the breathing and posture – then make addressing your fatigue your prime priority.

### How do I manage uncertainty?

Among the many useful guides that can be found on the GPSA website under Educational Resources you can find a guide that deals specifically with [Managing Uncertainty in General Practice](#).

### Where can I find more information about life hacks and self care?

Margo Field, former CEO of GPSA and current "unsticker" of people and organisations, has accumulated a number of resources in this area. Go to [www.margofield.com.au](http://www.margofield.com.au)

**12 Science-backed Ways to Connect and Recalibrate**

- 1- Take a walk in nature
- 2- Heart based breathing for 3 minutes
- 3- Long deep breaths
- 4- Hypnosis to stay calm
- 5- Move the way you feel
- 6- Superman posture for 2 minutes
- 7- Turn off the news and social media
- 8- 10 mins on a creative hobby
- 9- Surround yourself with loved ones who support you
- 10- Be grateful for each day
- 11- Practice things like yoga, pilates, tai chi, etc.
- 12- Take a shower (or shower if no bath)

**HOW ARE YOU?**

	Healthy	Unhealthy
EMOTIONS	Self-aware & calm	Irritable or impatient
EMOTIONS	Coping well	Panicky and irritable
MENTAL OUTLOOK	Positive outlook	Overwhelmed
PRODUCTIVITY	Working productively	Putting things off, forgetful
SLEEP	Sleeping normally	Trouble sleeping
ENERGY	Energetic	Low energy levels
ACTIVITY	Keeping active	Less activities
SOCIAL connection	Feeling connected	Social activity withdrawal

**TAKE ACTION**

- Keep it up!
- Ask for support, talk to friends & family, do something you enjoy
- See a health professional, don't put it off, act now
- Get help

References: [ramp.com.au](http://ramp.com.au), [commh.com.au](http://commh.com.au)