

What the experts say

Five of the latest books on stress management say you can reduce stress by....

...Reducing your information intake

"When you're continually besieged by information, you begin to feel overwhelmed, which leads to feeling overworked and stressed. If you can eliminate much of that extraneous information, you actually won't feel overwhelmed as often, and you won't feel as overworked.

* Control the spaces in your life, because information is stored in spaces – tables, shelves, desks, disks, Web sites and so on.

* The same principles apply to your filing cabinet, the top of your dining room table, your kitchen counter, your glove compartment or your back seat."

(*The Complete Idiot's Guide To Managing Stress*, by Jeff Davidson, Alpha Books)

...Being assertive

"Another way to manage stress is to be more assertive. Assertiveness involves matter-of-factly stating your wishes and opinions (without either cringing or attacking) in a manner that encourages the person you're interacting with to respond in a similar fashion – neither defensively nor aggressively. When you are assertive, you stake a claim to your own rights without threatening the rights of others."

(*Beat Stress With Strength: A Survival Guide for Work and Life*, by Stefanie Spera and Sandra Lanto, Park Avenue Productions)

Add to those stress points continual and repetitive rejection, frequent travel, endless calls, returned customer checks and sales that fall through – not to mention the burden of new technology that promises relief but actually has brought added stress to the workplace – and you have the potential for a full-blown case of burnout.

Carl Sherman, author of *Stress Remedies* (Rodale Press), says sales is stressful because of the pressure to perform and meet quotas. "You're judged by what you've sold, and if you don't sell, you're history," he says. That's stress with a capital S.

However, selling need not be overwhelming to the point of no return. While experts in all fields realize that a completely stress-free environment would create a nation of loafers, they also note many ways to alleviate stress and make it manageable.

The first thing to realize is that some stress is acceptable, even beneficial. Davidson says there is good stress, called eustress, that "gets you up and running, provides stimulation and challenge and is essential to development, growth and change."

"Some stress is necessary for you to concentrate, make decisions and function in a positive manner," says Toni Battison, author of *Beating Stress* (Macmillan). But when the stress becomes intense, "you feel out of control, you are no longer able to

