

Remaining Calm in High-Pressure Situations: 9 Strategies for Survivalists

Life comes at you quickly. Stressful times are a part of life, and how you react to them goes a long way in deciding the outcome. In SHTF scenarios, you have to be at the top of your game. Remaining calm and collected is critical.

This article outlines nine strategies for staying calm in high-pressure situations.

1. Breathing Exercises

The first step in reducing stress is a simple one. If people have told you to practice breathing, they're right – it helps your body feel calmer. There are psychological and physiological reasons behind this strategy.

First, breathing increases the oxygen to your brain. While that process happens daily, it's even more important in stressful situations. When you breathe, you stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS). The PNS works to relieve your body when you're feeling stressed. It's also a critical part of digestion and other bodily processes.

Try breathing exercises if you're feeling the stress from life's pressures. Deep breaths are particularly conducive to reducing stress. Start by going to a quiet place, free from distractions. Inhale with your nose for five seconds and exhale from your mouth for five seconds. Repeat the exercise 10 times and see how you feel. A few minutes of breathing can significantly impact your stress levels.

2. Eating Stress-reducing Foods

Not everyone deals with stress in the same way. Some people use eating as a tool to combat stress. Eating can help lower your stress levels and keep your mind focused. But what you eat matters. Some people opt for comfort foods, which may taste good but aren't the best in the long run.

To reduce stress, you'll want to focus on cortisol. This hormone is directly responsible for your stress levels, affecting factors like your blood pressure, sleep, inflammation and other health factors. Cortisol is good for your body, but you need to maintain a balance. Too much cortisol leads to high stress and other health problems. That's why you should eat foods that assist your cortisone levels.

Health experts say [eating vitamin B-rich foods like eggs](#), chicken and fortified cereal are reliable ways to combat cortisol levels and improve metabolism. Also, make room in your diet for foods high in unsaturated fats. Foods like salmon, avocados, walnuts and chia seeds reduce inflammation and regulate cortisol levels. If you need a quick fix, look for high-magnesium foods like pumpkin seeds, bananas and dark chocolate.

3. Using Inspirational Quotes

It's often helpful to learn from the past and see what successful leaders said in times of crisis. Inspirational quotes are more than words on a sheet of paper. They can influence and guide you through the worst of times. Make a list of inspirational quotes and read them aloud when you experience trouble. Times of pressure can bring out the best in you when you have a mantra.

For example, look at Henry Ford – founder of the famous Ford

Motor Company you know today. In a 1937 interview, [Ford told the Cincinnati-Times Star](#), “[The] greatest thing we can produce is character. Everything else can be taken from us, but not our character.”

You could also use quotes from America’s leaders during the most stressful times in our history. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt said in his inauguration speech, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” Another time-tested quote comes from President Abraham Lincoln, who once reminded the nation, “A house divided cannot stand.”

4. Reframing the Situation

Perception is of the utmost importance in any situation. One way to remain calm in a high-pressure scenario is to manipulate how you see it. Some people think the world is out to get them when SHTF scenarios occur, and their actions display it. Typically, they see the world in a negative light. But if you can spin it positively, you increase the odds of making it through.

For example, imagine there is a nationwide power outage because of an attack on the energy grid. Most people would likely react negatively out of fear, which is understandable. Alternatively, your mindset could shift positively. Consider the work you’ve done to prepare for this scenario. You’ve built survivalist knowledge, so now is the time to showcase your abilities to take care of yourself and your family. Simple reframing can help you stay calm in dire situations.

5. Remembering Sleep

High-pressure situations can be on your mind all day and night, especially when the scenarios come closer to reality. You can prepare day and night, but another thing you shouldn’t forget about is sleep. Your sleep quality at night

significantly affects how you function the next day. Try every night to get the best sleep possible, especially in high-pressure situations.

Sleeping is your body's way of recharging. Throughout the night, your body is refueling itself, so you're clear and alert by morning. Lack of sleep can raise cortisol levels and negate the effort you put in by eating stress-reducing foods. If you have trouble sleeping, talk to your doctor about remedies. It might not be your priority in high-pressure situations, but you should still make time for it.

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6. Reducing Alcohol and Drug Use

High-pressure situations are hardly straightforward. If one thing goes wrong, it can derail the rest of your plans. In these scenarios, you need as much control as possible. Relying on alcohol or drugs to get you through a situation is one of the fastest ways to lose control. Refrain or significantly reduce your consumption of substances when stressful situations arrive because they do more harm than good.

When the pressure comes, it's essential to stay calm. Unfortunately, nicotine works against that strategy. Research shows that smoking can increase anxiety, despite some people using it to relieve stress. Nicotine is a stimulant, and anxiety is a typical side effect. Another stimulant to avoid during stressful situations is caffeine. High-caffeine beverages like coffee can make you feel more stressed and increase your blood pressure.

Stimulants negatively affect your performance in high-pressure situations, and the same goes for depressants like alcohol. Studies show that alcohol increases your body's cortisol secretion over time. In the short run, it impairs your body's ability to think critically and make the best decisions.

7. Getting Help From Others

As the leader, you may feel tempted to do everything all by yourself. It's hard to shake off your responsibilities. However, it's wise to ask others to help you in stressful situations. There's strength in numbers. If you can find an ally, take advantage of your support system and ask for help.

Start by identifying your weaknesses. These weak points may be your spouse's or friend's strength. There's no situation where you're truly alone. You have someone out there who is willing to help you in a high-pressure situation. Likely, they're only a text or a phone call away. If they can't directly help you with a task, they may listen to your problems and offer advice.

8. Finding Stress-reducing Activities

In high-pressure situations, you may need to take your mind off serious things for a while. Some people resort to different methods based on their preferences. Activities you can do to relieve stress and remain calm include:

- **Listening to music:** For centuries, people have used music to calm themselves and relax their minds. Play relaxing classical music, folk music or whatever genre puts you in a calmer, happier mood. Listening to music creates dopamine production in your body and positively affects your mood. It may also help your focus.
- **Squeezing a stress ball:** Keep a stress ball nearby to

access it during high-pressure situations. Squeezing a stress ball has practical benefits for your physical and mental health. First, it makes your muscles and nerves stronger by contracting. When you're strengthening your nervous system, you're relieving stress. It's an effective short-term solution.

- **Chewing gum:** Another quick fix for relieving stress is chewing gum. Nervous people chew gum all the time. Have you seen sports coaches on the sideline go through a pack of gum per game? Research has shown that chewing gum may reduce stress by lowering your salivary cortisol, or the stress you can find in your spit.

9. Writing It Down

Sometimes, the solution to a problem is easier than you think. If you like to write, you may find answers by simply jotting down your issues on paper. One thing leads to another, and you end up mapping out your problems and how you feel about them. You might even find a solution to your questions in the process.

Writing down the issues at hand isn't always about finding answers. Sometimes you just need an outlet for your emotions. If talking about how you feel can be challenging, a pen and paper could be your solution. Journaling also helps with physical health. A recent study revealed that journaling helped patients with chronic illnesses, such as rheumatoid arthritis, experience fewer days with pain and lower mental distress.

Keeping the Peace No Matter What

One important quality of effective leadership is showing strength. The way to show power is through resilience and a calm demeanor. Your family and surrounding colleagues look to you for guidance during SHTF scenarios. Though high-pressure

situations can be brutal, you can use these strategies to remain calm.

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