

Writing it Out: Journaling for Stress, Burnout, and Overwhelm

People who deal with a lot of stress understand the implications of it. You know what it does to your mental and emotional health, how it affects your physical health, and what the repercussions are. You are fully aware that it can lead to feeling overwhelmed and like you can't handle your daily life, that it can lead to burnout and work issues, and cause problems with your relationships and personal life.

If this sounds like you, don't just make it a daily habit where you go through cycles of extreme stress. Find a better way to manage it, something that is healthy and has other benefits, such as writing about your stress.

Here are some ways to write out your stress and worry to finally take control of your life and stop living in constant worry.

Benefits of Journaling for Stress

Journaling is one of the best ways you can deal with stress. It provides so many benefits for you, from allowing you to do a brain dump (see below), to helping you understand where your stress is coming from. If you find out later that you have stress that comes and goes, going to previous journal entries in a stress journal helps you see what similarities there were, to figure out your main stress triggers.

And even more simply, it gives you a way to vent your worries and frustrations without worrying about burdening someone else with them.

Here are some journaling tips to try out to get you started:

- **Try a Brain Dump**

The brain dump provides a really easy way to get all those thoughts, worries, concerns, and ideas out of your head and onto paper. Through this process, you de-stress a lot, even coming up with worries you didn't realize you had. It starts helping you find clarity in your thoughts and worries and helps de-clutter your mind.

All you need to do for a brain dump is write whatever comes to mind on a piece of paper. This is often referred to as 'stream of consciousness' journaling, because you are just writing whatever comes to mind, without being concerned about organizing your thoughts. If your mind switches to a new subject, so does your journaling! Just keep

writing until you feel like all the main thoughts are out on paper.

- **Have a Worry or Stress Journal**

While you can journal in any type of journal you have, you might want a worry journal that is used especially for relieving your stress. This is something you will write in when you are dealing with a lot of stress or just trying to work through something. It helps to keep your thoughts organized, and makes it easier to go back and find a specific journal entry when you need to.

- **Talk About Your Anxiety or Depression**

You can also write about other mental health issues you are experiencing, such as how your depression or anxiety is affected. This is good to keep together with your anxiety or worry journal since they are frequently connected.

If you have clinical depression, you know the depressive episodes will come and go. However, you might not realize the link between depression and stress or understand all your triggers until you start detailing the experience in your journal.

- **Track Your Different Triggers**

Keeping track of triggers is one of the biggest benefits of journaling for stress, burnout, and overwhelm. You need to know why you are dealing with these experiences, not just when. The more detailed you are in each journal entry, the more you will start to see similar patterns. It might be the same time of the week, before or after payday, related to people in your life or personal relationships, and many other things.

- **Write in the Journal Throughout the Day**

When you are writing in a journal to help with stress and overwhelm, try to write during different times of the day. While morning or nighttime journaling is also really useful, for this purpose, you might need to have it available more often than other people using their journals.

If you have a stressful event in the middle of the day, you need to have that journal nearby so you can write about it, then go on with your day.

Keeping a journal can help you fully explore your emotions, release tension, and fully integrate your experiences into your mind.*

*Scott, E. (2018). Journaling is a great tool for coping with anxiety. *Very Well Mind*. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com/journaling-a-great-tool-for-coping-with-anxiety-3144672>