

# Reframing Stress



## When You Can't Get Rid of Stress

**Reframing** is a helpful practice to help minimize the physical and psychological pressure on your body during times of stress. Research shows that the way we **think** about our stress can have a large impact on the physiological effects of stress.

One particular study randomized people into two groups. One group was briefed before a stressful event and told that their stress was helpful for them — it was their body showing that it had the ability to rise to the occasion. The second group was given no briefing before the event. When they examined cortisol levels after the event, they found that both groups had very similar levels. However, the group given the briefing had much higher levels of DHEA, which helps to balance the effects of cortisol and allow the stress to be more of a positive learning experience than a harmful event. In other words, the way you **think** about your stress impacts the physiological effect of stress on the body and can allow it to be more **helpful** rather than **harmful**.

## How to Reframe

Reframing is the practice of taking a negative thought and turning it into one with a positive outlook. Here are few examples:

*“My body is broken” to “My body is healing”*

*“My body hates me” to “My body is giving me feedback or information”*

*“I can never feel better” to “I can actively work to feel better”*

*“If I can't do it perfectly, why should I do it?” to “Progress is better than perfection”*

You can use the tool of reframing to help shift your response to stressful situations. Notice the self-talk that may be occurring in the moment and see if you can turn it upside down.

## Reframe Activity

Take a moment to think about where stress is showing up in your life right now. What beliefs do you currently have around your stress, and how might you **reframe** these in a more positive light?

**Current statement or belief:**

**Reframed statement or belief:**

**Current statement or belief:**

**Reframed statement or belief:**

**Current statement or belief:**

**Reframed statement or belief:**