

Dr. ck's Top Interview Stress Busters

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Interviews are among the most stress-provoking aspects of a job search. Here are some Stress Busters that you can use before, during, and after the interview to help you present yourself as a confident and calm job hunter.

BEFORE

1. Rehearse mentally: Imagine yourself successfully responding to the situation.

Athletes have used the power of mental imagery to boost their performance for years. Use mental rehearsal to your advantage by imagining yourself successfully carrying out your planned response to the interview questions. This will also help you walk into the situation expecting a positive outcome.

2. Create a back up plan

Knowing that you have decided what to do if things do not go as planned will increase your confidence and reduce your anxiety in a situation. This way, you will be prepared if things do not go as expected. So have a back up plan for the different aspects of the interview situation such as getting to the interview, dealing with multiple interviewers, and what to eat if the interview takes a long time.

3. Build your confidence: Remind yourself of your strong points.

Self-confidence is one of your most important tools for succeeding in interviews. Make a list of the things that you are good at and the skills you will bring to the job. Now, read that list to yourself out loud the night before the interview or even before you walk into the interview. That will improve your self-confidence, so that you that you can tackle the interview with confidence.

4. Sleep: Have a nap or a good night's sleep.

You make better decisions, communicate more effectively, and have more energy when your body and mind are well rested. Whether you need a full 8 hours or a cat nap, get the rest that you need before the interview.

5. Eat a healthy meal.

Food is fuel. Your performance improves and you cope with greater ease when your body is well nourished. Replace high fat and sugary-filled foods and caffeinated drinks with a healthy meal and lots of water before your interview. This will increase your energy for coping and make you sharp and ready to impress during the interview.

DURING

6. Take a deep breath: A slow breath in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Feeling frazzled during the interview? Taking a slow, deep breath will increase the amount of oxygen going to your brain and help you feel calmer. Remember to purse your lips slightly as you exhale to avoid hyperventilating.

7. Pause to pull your thoughts together

Caught off guard by a question you can't answer? STOP your thoughts by mentally saying "Stop" and counting to 10 in your mind. Then organize your thoughts. If you need to, you can ask for more



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information or confirm that you have understood the question or request correctly. Finally, take your time responding.

8. Problem-solve: Take the problem apart, examine your options, and develop a plan or response.
Even the most intimidating situation or question can become more manageable when you break it down into smaller pieces and list all of your options for how to respond to it. That's one of the reasons why it is important to bring pen and paper with you to the interview. When you are tackling a complex question, ask the interviewer for a moment to jot down your thoughts. Write out the options and organize your answer in writing.

9. Silence your inner critic

Stay positive during the interview. Negative, self-critical thoughts can trigger the stress response, in addition to eroding your confidence. Be on the watch for self-criticism in the form of mental put downs and self-defeating thoughts such as "You've blown it," "They hate your answer," "You're making a fool of yourself." Stop that stream of negative chatter in your head as soon as you notice it. Try repeating encouraging thoughts instead.

10. Hold your tongue if you think you might say something you'll regret

When you are under the pressure of an interview situation, you may find that your emotional response to the interviewer's comments is intensified. Engaging in an angry or negative discussion with an interviewer will increase your stress levels and decrease your chances of getting the job. When you are feeling strong emotions, stop and think about what you're going to say before you say a word.

AFTER

11. Start afresh! Put the negative and stress-provoking situation behind you

Even if things don't go as you planned, it's important for you to leave the situation in the past. Replaying the situation prolongs the stress associated with it. So, allow yourself to put the situation behind you and stop thinking about it.

Remember that each interview is an opportunity to learn and improve on your interviewing skills. Focus on what you learned from the situation and move on.



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