



E - X - P - A - N - D - I - N - G THE STRESS MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

The effects of stress can weigh down Marines like rocks in a rucksack. The Mayo Clinic recommends that individuals master the four A's of dealing with stressful situations to help expand their stress management toolkit.

AVOID THE STRESSOR:

- Take control of your environment and the stressors in your daily life. If the evening news makes you anxious, turn off the TV. If traffic makes you tense, take a longer but less-traveled route. If the mall frustrates you, shop online.
- Put some distance between you and the stressor. If someone gets on your nerves, minimize the time you spend around that person.
- Learn to say no when you have the option by trying not to add more to your stress load.

ALTER THE STRESSOR:

- Express your feelings instead of bottling them up. If something is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way.
- Use words like: "I feel ___ when..."; "I love when ..."; "I don't like when..."
- Set limits up front. For example, "My schedule is packed today, so I only have 5 minutes for this conversation."

ADAPT TO THE STRESSOR:

- Look at the big picture: put the stressful situation into perspective. Ask yourself how important will it be in the long run. Worry productively, this applies to accepting things you can't change.

ACCEPT THE STRESSOR:

- Don't try to control the uncontrollable. Many things in life are beyond your control. Focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems

For more information on expanding your stress management toolkit, connect with your local [Community Counseling Program](#), [Military and Family Life Counselors](#), [OSCAR Team Members](#), [Chaplains](#), or chain of command.