



FINDING BALANCE

Stress Management

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Take action:

- ☒ Consider some daily stressors. Write down strategies to combat them when they arise. This will allow you to be prepared and implement them when the stressors occur.
- ☒ Set boundaries with those who cause you stress and distance yourself from negative influences.
- ☒ Strive to let go of the idea of perfectionism. Brené Brown, a human behavior researcher, says it best in her audiobook, **The Power of Vulnerability**.

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For most veterinary professionals, a day in the trenches may include: multiple heartbreaking euthanasia procedures, an owner who won't consent to treatment, completing endless SOAPs, long hours with no breaks, losing a patient under anesthesia and having to call the owner, disagreements with co-workers, physical and emotional exhaustion, no work-life balance and financial burdens. Sound familiar? The fact is that what we do each day results in some incredible highs and, at times, some crazy lows. The stress our career can sometimes bring upon our daily lives can feel crushing.

Not all stress is bad; sometimes it can actually be good for us. For example, as a deadline approaches, a little stress can motivate us to stop procrastinating and get it done.

However, how we view and react to stressful situations makes all the difference in how our bodies respond to it.

Severe stress has a number of negative impacts on our health. When experienced long term, stress can cause fatigue, high-blood pressure, headaches, sleep disorders, feeling of overwhelm, anxiety, depression, infertility and more.

Here are some strategies we can implement now to manage stress:

- **Don't take things personal**—Many of us are perfectionists and can be hurt and angered by a client's outbursts. When this happens, take a step back and recognize that everyone experiences stress in different ways.
- **Take a deep breath**—Taking a deep breath results in a slowed heartrate, decreased blood pressure and relaxation.
- **Place your hand over our hearts**—When we are feeling stressed, we should place our hands over our hearts, close our eyes, smile and think of someone we love or a fond memory.

We cannot always avoid stress; however, we can take steps to reduce it. This will not only improve our quality of life and sense of fulfillment, it will also allow us to be the best caregiver we can be. **TVP**

Laura Baltodano

Dr. Laura Baltodano graduated in 2013 from Washington State University. She is the owner of Lighthouse Pet Clinic in Lehigh Acres, Florida. In addition to veterinary medicine, Dr. Laura is passionate about equipping others with tools to enhance their wellbeing. She is a certified health and wellness coach, a certified 7 Minute Life Time Management Trainer, registered yoga teacher, mindfulness teacher and is licensed to teach *The Four Elements of Success* by Lori Beth Jones. She loves singing, kayaking, reading and archery and enjoys spending time with her husband, 4 children and 9 pets.

