

## Law Firm Business Development: Reducing Stress in 2017

By [Silvia L. Coulter](#) on January 5, 2017

What does stress have to do with business development? A lot. Building, maintaining and growing a significant practice coupled with billable hour requirements and participating in managing the firm all equal stress. These requirements are outside of one's personal life requirements whether those requirements mean taking care of yourself, your family, or your pet.

While we can't change all these requirements on our time, we can pay attention to and try to reduce the stress this all causes. *Alternative Medicine: The Definitive Guide* defines stress as "a reaction to any stimulus or interference that upsets normal function and disturbs your mental or physical health." The journal goes on to say, "Although stress itself is not a disease, it can aggravate numerous conditions including allergies, arthritis, asthma, atherosclerosis, cancer, colitis, diabetes, emphysema, gastritis, hypertension, hypoglycemia, speech problems and ulcers." That list is enough for me and likely anyone reading this blog to stop and pause and consider ways in which we can reduce stress since if we don't, something's going to get us. While the body's biochemistry has its own way of reacting to stress, eventually, chronic stress depletes the body's resources and its ability to adapt. The longer one is stressed, coping mechanisms will be compromised and illness will result. So what's a busy legal professional or business professional in a legal world to do? Here are a few (of many) tips:

- Go for a walk—even if it's in the hallways of the firm. Wear a pedometer, Fitbit or some tracking device and walk at least a mile every day (much better to do more but at least a mile will add to what you are already doing).
- Take three to five really deep breaths three times a day (or more). Just this can help temporarily lower your blood pressure and reduce stress.
- Try not to stress your heart further with hard core exercising—check with your doc. You'll be surprised how stressful hard core exercise routines are on your body. Most heart doctors are recommending walking or moderate exercise to decrease the stress on the body and heart.
- Get sleep. It seems impossible at times but most studies are now showing 7-9 hours when possible is critical for staying healthy. Even one day a week of long sleep can help.
- Do something different. If you hate your job, or you are not happy most of the time, you are stressing yourself and your health.
- Send an email to a friend or good contact just to say hello and keep in touch.

Just a few tips to start on your path of becoming less stressed in 2017. For more information about stress, read anything by stress researcher Hans Selye, M.D. a former Canadian physiologist or visit [www.stress.org](http://www.stress.org).

Here's to a stress-free, healthy 2017! **Vivere!**