

Cognitive Flexibility

Cognitive flexibility—the ability to think creatively and adapt to changing situations might help protect against certain stressors.

Your ability to be mentally flexible and adaptable exists on a spectrum. And it can vary, depending on your current situation. When you experience persistent, cumulative stress, cognitive flexibility can spiral and you can become more rigid and rule-based.

However, you can boost cognitive flexibility with practice. It starts with your mindset.

- Do you think stressors are damaging, debilitating, and disruptive? **OR**
- Do you think stressors are useful challenges that can help you learn, improve, and grow?

Your answer shapes the way you feel, think, and act—and the way your body responds.

When you see all stress as harmful, you're not showing cognitive flexibility. Therefore, you're likely to think, act, and respond physically in ways that make you less resilient.

However, when you see stress as an asset that can help, or as an opportunity for new ways of doing things, that is practicing cognitive flexibility. As a result, you're more likely to feel, think, act, and respond physically in ways that improve your performance and encourage adaptability and resourcefulness.

Cognitive Flexibility Creates a Cascade Effect

With greater long-term cognitive flexibility, you'll be more capable and resilient to new challenges in the future.

Start by:

- Asking yourself, "What am I grateful for today?"
- Celebrating "bright spots" no matter how big or small.