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5 High-Paying, Low-Stress Jobs

by Amy Bell
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If you're like thousands of other job seekers, you may dream of earning the big bucks without having to deal with the extreme stress that goes hand-in-hand with top-paying jobs. Of course, a high-salary, low-stress job sounds too good to be true. Or is it?

Believe it or not, you don't have to take on a heart-pounding career as a brain surgeon, airline pilot or stock broker to bring home some serious bacon. As a matter of fact, some of the highest-stress jobs pay surprisingly scanty salaries. Just think about police officers, firefighters and social workers. These folks have quite possibly the most nerve-racking jobs in the world, yet most of them earn less than \$45,000 a year. What about combat soldiers who face death on a daily basis? They typically earn less than \$30,000 a year.

In other words, high stress does not always equal a hefty salary, or vice versa. Fortunately, there are plenty of laid-back career choices that pay quite generously.

Physical Therapist

Although physical therapists (PT) work in the notoriously stressful medical field, they enjoy some unique advantages over ER nurses and doctors. First of all, PTs have flexible hours and generally aren't expected to work nights. Secondly, many physical therapists are self-employed - which means they don't have to deal with the stress of a boss breathing down their neck while they work.

Plus, as the massive Baby Boomer generation continues grow older and face new physical challenges, PTs are constantly flooded with patients. As a result, physical therapists rarely suffer from dry spells.

To top it all off, physical therapists can earn anywhere between \$50,000-105,000 a year. Now that's therapeutic.

Computer Software Engineer

If you're a tech geek seeking a relatively low-pressure career, you may want to check out the software engineering field. Software engineers design and test a variety of different types of software, from computer games to operating systems to business applications. These days, many software engineers can work from home, since their jobs can be done from practically anywhere.

Software engineers also bring home steep salaries, normally ranging between \$54,000-130,000 a year. There's nothing nerdy about that.

Civil Engineer

Civil engineers design and build our nation's infrastructure, from public buildings and roads to water supply and pollution control systems. Obviously, these projects aren't pressure-free, but civil engineers generally work in teams, which helps alleviate some of the stress. As a bonus, these experts also enjoy long deadlines. As a matter of fact, most engineers have a few years to design and plan out a project before the construction company even breaks ground.

Even less stressful? Civil engineers don't have to work too hard to hunt down jobs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, civil engineers are expected to see a 24% spike in employment growth over the next 10 years - well above average for all U.S. occupations. Civil engineers bring home a respectable \$50,000-115,000 a year.

Massage Therapist

Massage therapy is an extremely low-pressure, relaxing career for most people. (As long as the thought of touching a stranger's back doesn't drive your stress level through the roof, of course.) Not only are most massage therapists self employed, but they also get to smell soothing aromatherapy scents and listen to calming background music or

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ocean sounds all day while they work.

Because many massage therapists work part-time, yearly salaries vary wildly in this field. However, most of these massaging masters charge by the hour. On average, they earn between \$10-35 an hour.

Of course, if you take on plenty of clients, you could easily earn a salary of \$45,000 or more. That kind of cash will certainly not rub you the wrong way.

Technical Writer

In this high-tech age, new groundbreaking tools, mobile devices or innovative gadgets are released on practically a daily basis. Obviously, someone has to write about these ingenious doodads and complicated thingamabobs. That's where technical writers come into play.

Although they sometimes face tight deadlines, technical writers typically enjoy flexible hours and a comfortable, quiet workspace. Quite a few of them have an enviable 10-second commute - from their bedroom to their desk. Because all they need is a phone and a computer with an internet connection, many technical writers work from home.

What's more is that technical writers are extremely high in demand. As technical companies continue to release pioneering new products, someone has to transform their complex technical-ese into everyday language the average customer can comprehend. Technical writers generally earn between \$47,000-98,000 a year.

Lower Your Stress; Raise Your Salary

So, it turns out that you don't have to risk life and limb, save lives or suffer from stress-induced stomach ulcers to make a decent salary. From sales managers and graphic designers to college professors and training consultants, there are plenty of rewarding, angst-less jobs out there that come with generous salaries.

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