



Stress less

Tips and strategies for managing stress

Stress is part of life. A certain amount of stress can be useful. That tells you it's time to take action. But you don't want to let it build up to the point that you experience stress overload.

Here are some suggestions that can help you lower your stress level and avoid adding new stress.

- **Follow the basics.** You've heard it a million times before: Eat right, exercise and drink plenty of water. For some of us though, stress increases our desire for salty, sugary and caffeinated foods and beverages. Stress can zap your energy, making you feel like you would rather sleep than exercise. Fight the urge to sit in front the T.V. and eat a bag of potato chips. You can decrease your stress level by grabbing an apple and going for a walk.

- **Get plenty of sleep.** Although stress can lead to the desire to sleep, many people who are under stress have difficulty sleeping. It can be helpful to focus on the following ways to get a restful night's sleep:
 - Make sure your bedroom is dark, cool and free of distractions.
 - If you can't fall asleep after 30 minutes, get up. Do something relaxing such as reading for 20 minutes then try to fall asleep again.
 - Write down your thoughts and concerns.
 - Focus on your breathing; nice slow inhales and full exhales.



- **Know the source of your stress.** What's causing your stress? Knowing the source of your stress allows you to focus your stress-fighting efforts. Try keeping a stress journal. Write down when you feel stress and the events that led to these feelings. Think about one or two changes you can make to reduce this stress. Reward yourself when you've made a positive change.
- **Organize your life.** Did you know clutter can raise your stress level? If you have a house, car or office with excess clutter, you're increasing your stress level daily. Get organized by setting up a system that encourages you to always put items in their place. If you don't know where to start, don't worry. Dedicate 10–15 minutes every day to organization and start anywhere.
- **Manage your time.** Do you plan your day or do you just let it happen? Planning your day with beginning and end times for tasks and events helps you stay on track. Good time management can help cut the stress that comes from being rushed.
- **Relax.** Think about what you find relaxing, such as listening to music, gently stretching, meditating, spending time alone, reading or enjoying a hobby. Make sure you give yourself time each day to engage in these relaxing activities.
- **Keep a positive outlook.** We all have an internal voice. What's your voice telling you? We can make our internal messages positive by focusing on good thoughts and letting angry or stress-filled thoughts go. Reassure yourself that this stressful time will pass.

If you'd like some help reducing your stress, we can help.

Confidential support is available
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The EAP is administered by Resources For Living, LLC.

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