

Saying “no”: It’s a matter of health, happiness and survival!

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There are many everyday situations in which you don’t have the power or flexibility to say “no.” But there are also times when you can — and perhaps should — say “no.”

After all, if you say “yes” to every demand or favor, you’ll be so busy pleasing everyone else that you may forget to take care of yourself!

Saying “no” takes courage and skill

Two of the challenges of saying “no” include when and how to say it.

Here are examples of times when saying “no” can be a healthy choice:

- **Your calendar is bursting at the seams.** There’s just no wiggle room in your schedule. If you take on even one more task, it’ll be at the expense of something else you really want or need to do.
- **You’re already stressed out.** If you don’t say “no,” you’ll put even more pressure on yourself and others in your life too.
- **If you say “yes,” it’s just out of guilt.** If you want to feel angry and resentful much of your life, just keep on saying “yes” when you mean “no.”
- **Your instincts say “no.”** If you don’t feel good or right about a favor or request, go with your gut and say “no.”

Tips on how to say “no”

- **Be honest and brief.** Keep it short and sweet. Long-winded explanations often sound and feel awkward.
- **Be firm but nice.** You can sweeten up a “no” with something like: “Thank you for asking me but I just don’t have time right now.” Then change the subject.
- **Say you’ll think about it.** We all have people in our lives who just won’t take “no” for an answer. In those cases, don’t argue or give in because it’s easier. Instead, wait to give your answer. Say something like “Let me have a look at my calendar” or “I’ll get back to you.” Then be sure to follow up when you’re feeling strong enough to say “no.”
- **Offer a substitute.** Perhaps you’re too busy now but would like to help out. Consider offering to pitch in at another time that’s more convenient for you.

“No” helps you control your life

Learning to say “no” helps keep you in control of your life. It can help you build self-confidence and maintain a healthy balance in your everyday living.