

Coping Skills for Stress Management

- ⇒ **Get organized:** Organizing the details of daily life reduces stress. Use calendars and “to do” lists.
- ⇒ **Do it now:** Do your most difficult and least pleasant tasks at the beginning of the day when you are fresh.
- ⇒ **Know your limits:** Be realistic about what you can accomplish.
- ⇒ **Change your attitude:** Train yourself to see stressful situations as challenges rather than obstacles.
- ⇒ **Talk it over:** Talking over difficult issues with a friend helps reduce stress and also helps you form solutions.
- ⇒ **Take a break:** A two or three minute break in the middle of a stressful situation can give you a new outlook on a problem.
- ⇒ **Learn to say “NO”:** There are some demands over which you have no control. Separate those from activities over which you do have some control, and learn to say “No” to demands.
- ⇒ **Positive self-talk:** In the face of a stressful situation you can manage with positive statements, such as: “I can handle this one step at a time”.
- ⇒ **Treat you body right:** You will be better equipped to handle stress if you eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep and exercise regularly.
- ⇒ **Take charge:** Take responsibility for making your life what you want it to be.

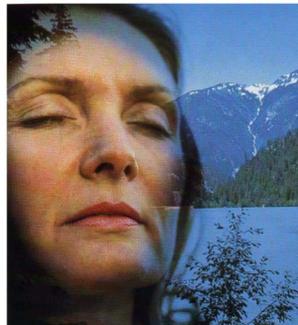


Stress Reducing Techniques

Guided imagery:

Guided imagery is a stress reducing technique which uses imagination as a means of relaxation. This requires quiet and concentration. Pretend you are walking through a quiet rainforest or lying on a warm beach – whichever it takes for you to unwind.

Guided imagery can also be used to preview or review any stress related incident or relationship that you want to improve. Practice in your mind, in color and sound, how you would like a particular relationship to be. “See” yourself being successful.



Relaxation:

You can use relaxation techniques to produce small restful states by closing your eyes and breathing deeply, slowly and regularly. “Let go” of muscle tension with each exhalation, relaxing all your muscles beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face. You can also “breathe out” troubling thoughts and worries.



Exercise:

Exercise is an excellent form of stress management. Exercise relieves both physical and mental tension. Choose activities which you enjoy, and make time for them. Consider walking, jogging, dancing, swimming, bicycling, or yard work. If you don't have a regular exercise program, start slowly, and increase gradually to avoid injuries.

What is Stress?

Everyone experiences stress as part of life. The presence of time, money, and relationships ensure that stress will always be with us. But stress does not need to be negative or overwhelming. It can be the opportunity to make important changes in your life.

Stress is your response to events or situations that call for a change, threaten the order or safety of your life, or otherwise place an unusual demand on your physical, mental, and emotional resources.

Reactions to stress vary and can take their toll, both mentally and physically.

Common stress symptoms include:

- ◆ Tense muscles that cause headache, backache, jaw ache
- ◆ Stomach pain, indigestion, bowel upset, ulcers
- ◆ Anxiety, nervousness, tension, depression
- ◆ Anger, irritability, restlessness, or exhaustion

Some people react to stress by eating or drinking too much, losing sleep, or using tobacco. Others may “take out” their frustration on those around them through yelling or abusive behavior. Managing stress is not only for your health but also for the success of relationships in your personal life or work.

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Managing Your Stress

