

Stress Management Tips

1. Keep in mind that stress isn't a bad thing.

Stress motivates us to work toward solving our problems. Reframing thoughts to view stress as an acceptable emotion, or as a tool, has been found to reduce many of the negative symptoms associated with it. The goal is to manage stress, not to eliminate it.

2. Seek an outlet for your frustrations.

Holding on to pent-up frustration or other negative emotions can be very taxing on us both mentally and physically. One of the best ways to manage stress is seeking out healthy outlets, such as exercise or any activity that encourages you to move your body and release pent up stress. Journaling is another great way to reduce negative feelings and gain insight and perspective. Talking to others can be useful too, just beware of over venting and getting lost in a cycle of negativity. Venting can become toxic, especially if it is not solution focused. Ask yourself or ask others, what you can do that is solution focused for the problem at stake?

3. Prioritize your responsibilities.

Focus on completing quick or easy tasks first. Having too many "to-dos" can be stressful. Quickly knock out the small tasks and clear up your mind to focus on larger responsibilities.

4. Focus on the basics... sleep well, eat healthy and practice self-care.

Stress can start a harmful cycle where basic needs are neglected, which leads to more stress. Make a point to focus on your basic needs, such as eating well, keeping a healthy sleep schedule (avoid binge watching shows or excessive screen time), exercising, and other forms of self-care.

5. Don't put all your eggs in one basket... seek BALANCE.

People who are overinvolved in one aspect of their life often struggle with stress when that area is threatened. Balance your time and energy amongst many areas, such as career, family, friends and hobbies.

6. Keep things in perspective.... take a step back.

In the heat of the moment, little problems can feel bigger than they are. Take a step back, and think about how important your stressors are in the broader context. Will they matter in a week? In a year? What would you say to a friend in a similar situation? Encourage rather than criticize yourself in a difficult situation.

7. Seek out positive and supportive people. Set limits on unhealthy relationships.

Seek out relationships with individuals who are encouraging and supportive of you. It is important to set boundaries in difficult situations or with "difficult" people who might not be putting your best interest first. You can practice by saying, "no thank you, that doesn't work for me" or other assertive communication techniques.

8. Beware of alcohol and other drugs ... it will only add to your problems.

9. Take up a hobby. Learn a new skill. Help others. Be creative. Set aside time for yourself. Have fun!

Engage your senses, meet new people, build confidence, get involved with your community or simply help out someone you know. Enjoy yourself, relax a bit, get out in nature or give back to others. All of these activities reduce stress.

10. Take responsibility for yourself. It is not your job to take care of everyone and everything.

You will quickly feel stressed, burnt out, resentful and overwhelmed if you take on the responsibilities and burdens of those around you. Do not deprive others of the life lesson of learning from their own actions.

11. Accept: It is as it is...

Some situations we simply cannot change. We tend to fight against these distressing thoughts and feelings or often try to avoid them. If we can learn to notice and accept them, we can begin to give up the struggle and allow the sensations to just be. Acceptance is key to reducing stress. This can sometimes entail adjusting our expectations of ourselves, others or certain situations.