

STRESS MANAGEMENT

IF YOU CAN'T LOSE IT, USE IT



What does stress management mean?

Stress is part of life. But too much stress can lead to health problems. Managing stress means doing your best to control how much is in your life. It also means having a strategy for how you'll react when it occurs.

How is stress affecting your life right now?

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Fewer sick days. Ever feel like being stressed and getting sick go hand in hand? They sometimes do. Less stress *and* less illness: That's worth aiming for.

Better moods. Everyday stressors can drag down your moods, if you let them. Smiling, laughing, feeling happy ... that's the flip side. (And it's definitely doable.)

Less tossing and turning. Stress can make it hard to fall asleep and stay asleep. Managing it makes it easier to wind down and get health-boosting Zs.

Stronger relationships. While stress can be bad for your relationships, managing it with a partner or friend can bring you closer. Nice, huh?

TRY THIS AT HOME

Uncluttering your physical space can do wonders to unclutter your mind. Set a timer for 10 minutes to create one clear, calm space in your home. Stack piles of papers, throw out trash, and recycle or give away things you don't need or use.

FIVE WAYS TO GET STARTED



Breathe deeply. When you're stressed, try taking deep, cleansing breaths. It helps you slowww down.



Get social. Turn to someone who listens, understands or has ideas to help. Life's stressors can feel a lot lighter with support from others.



Walk away. Take a break from a stressful situation with a 5-minute walk to clear your head. Sounds simple, but it can work.



Write it down. Keep a pen and paper by your bed to write down your zooming thoughts when they keep you up at night. There. Now you can sleep.



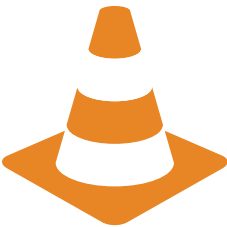
Schedule worry time. When stress interferes with your life, try a 10-minute worry session. Then let the worries go for the rest of the day. What a feeling!

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REALLY? I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

- Genetics and life experiences can make a difference in how people react to stressful events.
- The body is set up to handle stress and then return to normal. When stress doesn't go away, it can increase your risk of anxiety, heart disease, sleep problems and more.
- Listening to or playing music can lower stress hormones and decrease muscle tension.
- Having a runner's high doesn't just come from running. You can get the same good feeling from other forms of exercise like a nature hike.
- Too stressed to laugh? Even a fake laugh causes positive physical changes in your body as it amps up and then cools down your stress response.



WRITE YOUR PERSONAL VISION

Create a short phrase capturing a benefit of stress management, whichever benefit is most important to you. Say it anytime you start to veer from your new path.

Example: I'm managing my stress so my mood stays upbeat.

My personal vision

WHO SUPPORTS YOU IN YOUR EFFORTS TOWARD STRESS MANAGEMENT?

PLAN FOR YOUR ROADBLOCKS

We all encounter roadblocks from time to time. Try planning ahead with this technique recommended by personal-change experts: First, envision the benefits of reaching your goal, starting with your personal vision. Then, imagine your biggest roadblocks and how you'll get past them.

ROADBLOCK	STRATEGY
I get overwhelmed. Then I want to check out on good behaviors.	I'll keep a list nearby to remind me of methods I can use to reduce stress.