



## STRESS MANAGEMENT

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### Abstract

*Stress can be effectively managed in many different ways. The best stress management plans usually include a mix of stress relievers that address stress physically and psychologically and help to develop resilience and coping skills. Just as stress is perceived differently by each of us, stress affects us all in ways that are unique to us. One person may experience headaches, while another may find stomach upset is a common reaction, and a third may experience any of a number of other symptoms. While we all react to stress in our own ways, there is a long list of commonly experienced effects of stress that range from mild to life-threatening. Stress can affect immunity, which can impact virtually all areas of health. Stress can affect mood in many ways as well. Creating a stress management plan is often one part of a plan for overall wellness. Stress can come from many sources, which are known as stressors. Because our experience of what is considered "stressful" is created by our unique perceptions of what we encounter in life (based on our own mix of personality traits, available resources, and habitual thought patterns), a situation may be perceived as "stressful" by one person and merely "challenging" by someone else.*

**Keywords** – *Stress Management, Stressors, Approaches*

### Introduction

Stress management offers a range of strategies to help you better deal with stress and difficulty adversity in your life. Managing stress can help you lead a more balanced, healthier life. Stress is an automatic physical, mental and emotional response to a challenging event. It's a normal part of everyone's life. When used positively, stress can lead to growth, action and change. But negative, long-term stress can lessen your quality of life

### **Stress management approaches include:**

Learning skills such as problem-solving, prioritizing tasks and time management.

Enhancing your ability to cope with adversity. For example, you may learn how to improve your emotional awareness and reactions, increase your sense of control, find greater meaning and purpose in life, and cultivate gratitude and optimism.

Practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, yoga, meditation, tai chi, exercise and prayer.

Improving your personal relationships.

### **The importance of managing stress**

If you're living with high levels of stress, you're putting your entire well-being at risk. Stress wreaks havoc on your emotional equilibrium, as well as your physical health. It narrows your ability to think clearly, function effectively, and enjoy life. It may seem like there's nothing you can do about stress. The bills won't stop coming, there will never be more hours in the day, and your work and family responsibilities will always be demanding. But you have a lot more control than you might think.

Effective stress management helps you break the hold stress has on your life, so you can be happier, healthier, and more productive. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun and the resilience to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on. But stress management is not one-size-fits-all. That's why it's important to experiment and find out what works best for you. The following stress management tips can help you do that.

Stress management starts with identifying the sources of stress in your life. This isn't as straightforward as it sounds. While it's easy to identify major stressors such as changing jobs, moving, or going through a divorce, pinpointing the sources of chronic stress can be more complicated. It's all too easy to overlook how your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors contribute to your everyday stress levels.

Sure, you may know that you're constantly worried about work deadlines, but maybe it's your procrastination, rather than the actual job demands, that is causing the stress.

### **To identify your true sources of stress**

Look closely at your habits, attitude, and excuses:

Until you accept responsibility for the role you play in creating or maintaining it, your stress level will remain outside your control.

When you're stressed, the last thing you probably feel like doing is getting up and exercising. But physical activity is a huge stress reliever and you don't have to be an athlete or spend hours in a gym to experience the benefits. Exercise releases endorphins that make you feel good, and it can also serve as a valuable distraction from your daily worries.

While you'll get the most benefit from regularly exercising for 30 minutes or more, it's okay to build up your fitness level gradually. Even very small activities can add up over the course

of a day. The first step is to get yourself up and moving. Here are some easy ways to incorporate exercise into your daily schedule:

- Put on some music and dance around.
- Take your dog for a walk.
- Walk or cycle to the grocery store.
- Use the stairs at home or work rather than an elevator.
- Park your car in the farthest spot in the lot and walk the rest of the way.
- Pair up with an exercise partner and encourage each other as you work out.
- Play ping-pong or an activity-based video game with your kids.

While just about any form of physical activity can help burn away tension and stress, rhythmic activities are especially effective. Good choices include walking, running, swimming, dancing, cycling, tai chi, and aerobics. But whatever you choose, make sure it's something you enjoy so you're more likely to stick with it.

While you're exercising, make a conscious effort to pay attention to your body and the physical (and sometimes emotional) sensations you experience as you're moving. Focus on coordinating your breathing with movements, for example, or notice how the air or sunlight feels on your skin. Adding this mindfulness element will help you break out of the cycle of negative thoughts that often accompanies overwhelming stress.

### **Connect to others**

There is nothing more calming than spending quality time with another human being who makes you feel safe and understood. In fact, face-to-face interaction triggers a cascade of hormones that counteracts the body's defensive fight-or-flight response. It's nature's natural stress reliever (as an added bonus, it also helps stave off depression and anxiety). So make it a point to connect regularly and in person with family and friends.

Keep in mind that the people you talk to don't have to be able to fix your stress. They simply need to be good listeners. And try not to let worries about looking weak or being a burden keep you from opening up. The people who care about you will be flattered by your trust. It will only strengthen your bond.

Of course, it's not always realistic to have a pal close by to lean on when you feel overwhelmed by stress, but by building and maintaining a network of close friends you can improve your resiliency to life's stressors.

### **Make time for fun and relaxation**

Beyond a take-charge approach and a positive attitude, you can reduce stress in your life by carving out "me" time. Don't get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of life that you forget

to take care of your own needs. Nurturing yourself is a necessity, not a luxury. If you regularly make time for fun and relaxation, you'll be in a better place to handle life's stressors.

**Set aside leisure time.** Include rest and relaxation in your daily schedule. Don't allow other obligations to encroach. This is your time to take a break from all responsibilities and recharge your batteries.

**Do something you enjoy every day.** Make time for leisure activities that bring you joy, whether it be stargazing, playing the piano, or working on your bike.

**Keep your sense of humor.** This includes the ability to laugh at yourself. The act of laughing helps your body fight stress in a number of ways.

**Take up a relaxation practice.** Relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, and deep breathing activate the body's relaxation response, a state of restfulness that is the opposite of the fight or flight or mobilization stress response. As you learn and practice these techniques, your stress levels will decrease and your mind and body will become calm and centered.

#### **Conclusion –**

Stress is your body's response to changes in your life. Because life involves constant change ranging from everyday, routine changes like commuting from home to work to adapting to major life changes like marriage, divorce, or death of a loved one there is no avoiding stress. Your goal shouldn't be to eliminate all stress but to eliminate unnecessary stress and effectively manage the rest. There are some common causes of stress that many people experience, but each person is different. Many people are stressed by their jobs, relationships, financial issues, and health problems, as well as more mundane things like clutter or busy schedules. Learning skills to cope with these stressors can help reduce your experience of stress

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