

TIPS TO MANAGE STRESS

Some Powerful and Effective Things You Can Do Right Away to Manage Stress

Schedule Breaks

Write them in your calendar book. Take daily stress management breaks.

Get Enough Sleep

Most of us need a good eight hours a night. Drink caffeine only in the morning, if at all. Develop a bedtime ritual to relax yourself and go to bed at the same time. Do not watch the news or disturbing television shows before going to bed. If you have consistent sleep problems, consult your physician. Sleep is essential to well-being.

Make Noise/Listen to Music

Sing in the shower. Play your favorite upbeat tapes in the car – roll up the windows and sing out loud. Listen to music that lifts your spirit.

Deep and Slow Breathing

Close your eyes and take deep breaths slowly inhaling and exhaling. Say to yourself as you inhale, "Relaxation Come In." As you exhale say to yourself, "Stress Go Away," or something to this effect that works for you.

Mental Vacation

Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Then visualize a favorite vacation place or relaxation activity, e.g., a beach, meadow, getting a massage. Let your imagination take you to that place and activity remembering the sights, smells, and feelings.

Schedule Worry to a Limited Time

Write down a list of all the worries, pressures, and concerns that crowd your mind and clamor for attention. Schedule a time each day for worrying when you take out the list and consider it. No worries at any other time.

Seek Humor and Fun

Rent a funny movie, read humorous books and cartoons, make an effort to look at the humorous side of life. Dance alone, color in a coloring book, paste stickers.

Serenity

It is so important to give up the illusion that we can be perfect and can control everything in our lives. At the same time we can focus on what we can control, e.g., our attitudes and behavior. Say the Serenity Prayer:

*"Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference."*

Express Your Self

It really does help to express what is on our minds - especially when we are troubled. If you do not feel comfortable talking about it, try writing it down and keeping a journal or drawing your thoughts in color.

Do Something Kind

One of the best ways to manage our stress is to get out of ourselves and do something nice for others, e.g., give a compliment to someone or say thank you.

Stretch and Move

Stand up and stretch. Arch your back and stretch your arms and fingers up over your head and then out wide. Hold each posture for a while and then let go. Now move your body all around, shake your hands and feet. Take a deep breath and let yourself go limp.

Stop Racing the Clock

We will never again have the time to do everything we should, so stop watching the clock and take a few deep breaths and relax.

Attitude of Gratitude

Count your blessings every day. You will find more and more things to be grateful for and you will stop a lot of your negative and depressing thinking.

Self-Affirmation

Write a positive and caring message to yourself. Keep it close by and read it regularly e.g., "I am a good person. I do not have to be perfect. I deserve to have good things in my life. It is okay to make mistakes – that is how we learn. I have a lot to be grateful for."