



Managing Stress

Stress management starts with identifying the sources of stress in your life and then finding ways to cope through your thoughts, emotions, schedule, and problem solving. While not all stress can be avoided, there are many ways to manage and cope with stress in a healthy way. Use the coping strategies below test out what works best for your unique style and circumstance.

✓ **Tip #1: Relaxation**

Deep breathing

One of the most immediate and helpful things you can do to bring your heart rate down and relax your body.

Meditation

Taking care of the mind body connection on a regular basis helps you be aware of how your body reacts to stress and how you can combat that reaction.

Fun

Laughing and doing things you enjoy are very important for your physical and mental health.

✓ **Tip #2: Exercise your brain**

Negative thoughts

Stay away from negative thinking patterns that are making the stress worse (e.g. I'll never do well on the test, everyone else is smarter than me, I am not good at anything, etc.).

Be prepared

Know what stresses you out and create a "toolbox" (or list) of techniques that you discovered helped you work through previous stressful moments.

Different perspectives

Try to remember to think outside the box and come up with some alternative ways to look at the situation. Is it really as bad as it feels?



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Tip #3: Care for your body

Eat Healthy

Food is your body's energy supply, so when stress is sucking all your energy out, you need to pay extra attention to what you put in. Stay away from junk food (even if your body is craving it) and stick with nutritious foods rich in vitamins and antioxidants.

Exercise

Research shows that daily exercise can help prevent stress, depression, and anxiety. Get out there and get moving!

Sleep

Sleep is so important when your body is under excessive stress. Be sure you give your body the rest it needs so you don't become run down and sick.

Tip #4: Support

Speak up

Stress can often make you feel like a heavy weight rests on your shoulders that has to be carried around everywhere you go. Sharing your feelings with others you trust can create a supportive environment that helps relieve some of the weight. Your supporters may be able to directly help you manage some of the stressors or suggest alternative solutions you can take.

See a professional

Given the physical and mental health risks caused by excessive ongoing stress, it's important that you see a professional if the stress lingers and/or shows no signs of reduction. Go to your campus counseling center or health center and be honest with everything you are experiencing loss of sleep, fatigue, trouble concentrating, worry, etc. From here, a professional can make sure you get the proper treatment and help get you on the path to healthy stress management.