

Stress Management Techniques

We all manage stress in different ways.

Find the healthy techniques that help you manage your stress

Rank your top 5 stress management techniques (or write your own)

- _____ Think calm - your thoughts can effectively manage your body and mind - Think about happy things
Tell yourself positive things in your mind
- _____ Take time for yourself everyday - schedule a few minutes daily for doing something you enjoy
- _____ Write away your worries - write poetry - write about stressful things - then throw the page away
- _____ Participate in a hobby or sport or any healthy activity you enjoy - join a team or club
- _____ Exercise - get moving - take a walk - stretch your muscles - especially your shoulders, neck and back
- _____ Get a pet or play with a friend or neighbors pet
- _____ Listen to calm/ relaxing music
- _____ Talk to friends or family members - express you feelings - ask them for help or advice
- _____ Eat well - eat lots of fruits and vegetables - avoid unhealthy foods and substances (ex. caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, other harmful drugs)
- _____ Get enough sleep regularly - take a nap
- _____ Cry
- _____ Make a plan to overcome your struggles - plan your time - ask for help - think ahead to how your will handle the problem next time. Don't put off work or assignments so much that they build up.
- _____ Laugh - Have a sense of humor - read a comic or watch a funny show
- _____ Have a balance in your life - don't worry too much about work, school, social activities, money or things you can't control

Use relaxation techniques - Examples

- _____ 1. Take a deep breath, hold it, and then slowly release the breath and the tension. Do this until you feel your body relax.
- _____ 2. Start at the top of your head, flexing, and then relaxing each part of your body down to your toes
- _____ 3. Close your eyes and let your arms hang down at your sides. As you relax, visualize the tension from your head, neck, and shoulders flowing down your arms and out through your fingertips
- _____ 4. Close your eyes and visualize warm sunshine washing over you, melting away the tension, and relaxing all of your muscles
- _____ 5. Think of a place where you feel very relaxed and calm. Close your eyes and visualize being in that place. Pretend you can feel, see, hear, and smell what the place is like around you

“Studies show that stress could be the wild car” Deseret News 2/26/05

By Tara Parker-Pope – Wall Street Journal

“One of the myths of aging is to choose your parents wisely...***But since only about 1/3 of aging is heritable, the rest is acquired-*** That means you are responsible for your own old age”

“People age better if they don’t smoke, don’t abuse alcohol, maintain a healthy weight, and get regular exercise.”

“Increasingly, researchers are viewing stress- how much stress we face in a lifetime, and how well we cope with it- as one of the most significant factors for predicting how well we age...Aging studies consistently show that the ***healthiest agers are particularly adept at shedding stress.***”

“To understand why it is so important to learn to manage stress, you have to understand what happens inside your body ***when you experience stress. The body rapidly mobilizes energy, delivering glucose to your muscles. The heart rate, blood pressure and breathing rate increase so that more oxygen can be delivered more quickly*** throughout your body. Functions that aren’t needed in an emergency – such as ***digestion, sex drive and even your immune system- are eventually suppressed. Meanwhile stress hormones that help dull pain and sharpen senses are released, Blood vessels constrict and clotting factors increase to slow bleeding in case you are wounded.***”

“The problem is, it doesn’t take much to switch on the stress response. Worrying about a job deadline or fighting with your spouse can both trigger it. If you’re good at coping with stress, then your stress response will eventually turn off. But ***unremitting stress – in a person who can’t shed it – leaves the stress response in the “on” position.*** All those changes that protect you in a moment of crisis suddenly turn on you. ***Now you’re just a person with unregulated blood sugar, high blood pressure, blood clots, a depressed sex drive and an immune system bucking under all the strain. It sounds a lot like getting old.***”

Stress Busters –

- Seek control when you can. Successful agers typically feel in control of their day to day lives, but they don’t fret about issues they can’t control. Stress is easier to cope with and produces fewer physical effects- if we feel a sense of control. So while work stress is inevitable, it’s less harmful if you can control various aspects of your day
- Information can relieve stress. Stress doesn’t take as much of a toll if we can predict it. Seek accurate information in the face of a stressful situation. If you are facing cancer, long term fears are certain to cause stress, but you can minimize the overall stress of the illness by learning about treatments and side effects so you know what to expect.
- Keep Friends and Family Close. Study after study shows social support makes a measurable difference in how we cope with stress and how we age.