



Tips to Relax and Reduce Stress

It is important to relieve your stress because it can lead to mild health problems such as insomnia and headaches. It can lower the body's immune system, increasing susceptibility to illness. It also may worsen or contribute to some more serious health conditions.

Some people are better at managing stress than others. Those people all cultivate the same habits:

Ten Habits of Effective Stress Managers

1. They know how to relax.
2. They eat well and exercise often.
3. They get enough sleep.
4. They don't worry about the unimportant stuff.
5. They don't get angry often.
6. They are organized and their life is not cluttered.
7. They manage time efficiently.
8. They have and make use of a strong social support system.
9. They live according to their values—their goals are aligned with what's important to them.
10. They have a good sense of humor.

None of us can escape the stress of daily living, but we can learn to manage it better and become better stress managers. Try the following tips to protect your physical and mental health from the strain of stress:

- **Try some deep breathing.** Take a slow deep breath—hold it for five seconds—then slowly exhale.
- **Learn and practice meditation.** Create peaceful mental images.
- **Take a mental health break.** Make some time each day to devote to yourself—sometimes even 10 to 30 minutes really can help.
- **Strive for balance in your life.** Make time for activities and people you enjoy.
- **Use your support system.** Share your feelings with a caring friend or family member.
- **Just say no.** Remember that it's OK to say no to requests that push you beyond your limits.
- **Take one thing at a time.** Focus on the task at hand and do it well.
- **Don't demand perfection.** Ease up on yourself and those around you.
- **Take care of yourself.** Be sure to exercise regularly, eat a well-balanced diet and get enough rest.
- **Plan ahead.** Factor in time for traffic or other delays so that you're more relaxed when you get to work or your appointments.
- **Develop a positive attitude.** Try to view negative situations in a positive way.
- **Remove the clutter in your life.** Clean your house, garage or workspace regularly.
- **Laughter is the best medicine.** Find what makes you laugh. When you're laughing, you don't have time to be stressed out. And, don't take yourself too seriously.
- **Curb Caffeine.** Stimulants such as tobacco and caffeine can rev up your nervous system, which increases stress.
- **Seek help.** At times, you may feel that your stress is difficult to cope with, or is interfering with your daily life. If the stress in your life becomes overwhelming, don't hesitate to seek professional help from your EAP.

Here when you need us.

Call: 833-812-5181

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