

Stress and Your Health



Did you know that over 80% of all illness and disease today anywhere in the world can be linked back to one common element...STRESS!

Medical conditions caused or aggravated by stress:

Heart disease	High blood pressure	Heartburn	Ulcers
Chronic pain	Infertility	Migraines	PMS
Skin problems	Diabetes	Asthma	Obesity
Autoimmune diseases	Irritable bowel syndrome	Decreased immunity to acute colds and influenza	Allergies

Proper stress management may help reduce the potential of dealing with chronic diseases later.

GUIDELINES FOR REDUCING AND MANAGING STRESS

1. **Eat a healthy diet.** Well-nourished bodies are better prepared to cope with stress, so eat a nutrient-dense diet of whole, organic foods that help to nurture your body.

- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.
- Reduce caffeine and sugar. By reducing the amount of coffee, soft drinks, chocolate, and sugar snacks in your diet, you'll feel more relaxed and you'll sleep better.



2. **Exercise regularly.** Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress. Make time for at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times per week. Nothing beats aerobic exercise for releasing pent-up stress and tension.

3. **Get enough sleep.** Adequate sleep fuels your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired will increase your stress because it may cause you to think irrationally.

4. **Think positive thoughts and be grateful.** Look for the good in a situation or person. Positive thoughts and gratitude come back to you.

5. **Have a "Take Charge" approach to life with time management.** By planning and setting goals, more can be accomplished with less effort and time. Be assertive by saying "no" firmly and sincerely when you should.

6. **Connect with others.** Spend time with positive people who enhance your life. A strong support system will buffer you from the negative effects of stress. Learn to ask for help if you need it.

7. **Learn to recognize your individual stress signals.** Listen to your body so you can recognize your individual stress signals such as headaches, muscle tension, or a nervous feeling.

8. **Set aside relaxation 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.

STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUES

Go for a walk.

Write in your journal.

Work in your garden.

Take a yoga class.

Use aromatherapy.

Have a good workout.

Spend time in nature.

Take a long bath.

Get a massage.

Listen to music.

Practice meditation.

Use breathing techniques.

Talk to a supportive friend.

Play with a pet.

Curl up with a good book.

Watch a comedy

Use Biofeedback

Try Autogenics or Guided Imagery.

RESOURCE: Seaward, Brian Luke. *Achieving the Mind-Body-Spirit Connection*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2005.

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