



Good Ways to Reduce Stress

Excess stress can keep you from being as happy and healthy as you could be. Try some of these commonsense approaches. It's easy. It works.

- **Get enough sleep and rest.**

Don't stay up until midnight watching TV or playing computer games. Take a catnap in the afternoon when you can. Sleep is relaxing and healing. Fatigue increases stress.



- **Go for a walk.** 30 minutes a day of moderate activity will release tension and help you sleep better at night. If you can walk on the beach or in the mountains you'll feel even better. Bike, swim, hike, golf, or pick your favorite activity. Whatever you choose, try to do it every day.

- **Eat three nutritious meals a day.** Sit down and eat slowly. Don't skip meals – especially breakfast. Eat at least one warm meal. Turn off the TV while you eat. Stress can trigger overeating.

- **Go easy on junk food,** caffeine, alcohol, chocolate, and other things you know aren't good for you. Even though stress may motivate your consumption, these substances will not reduce your stress.

- **Be good to yourself - you deserve it.**

Don't be so hard on yourself and just get on with whatever you need to do. Do the best you can and don't be overly critical of yourself or others. Take a break every once in a while. One minute of deep breathing can be like a mini-vacation.



- **Do something you enjoy every day**

– work a crossword puzzle, pull weeds in the garden, read a chapter in a good book, or whatever you enjoy. Make the time – you'll be glad you did. Paint that picture, write that book, or learn to play the bagpipes.

- **Learn to manage your time** – set priorities. Make lists, plan ahead, and don't put things off. The longer you wait, the higher your stress level.

- **Kiss your spouse,**

hug your kids, pet your dog, and laugh a lot. Laughter can take the stress out of tense situations. Good relationships help everybody. Managing your stress will also result in lower stress levels in those around you.



- **Visit a dear friend or relative.** Catch up on all the news and enjoy the company. Sitting and talking can reduce stress.

- **Learn to say NO and to delegate.** You can't do everything. You shouldn't do everything. Ask for help. Trying to do too much increases stress and decreases productivity.

- **Share your feelings and ideas** with someone you trust. Then, be a good listener when they share with you. Trusting someone and sharing with them reduces stress.

- **Be a positive thinker.** Learn from your experiences. Expect the best. Talk to yourself: "I can" and "This could be fun" work better than "No way" or "I'll never get this done."

Sources: Relaxation Ideas (for Adults). The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information. US Department of Health and Human Services. 2001.; Axmaker L et al. WellAssured Guide to Stress Management and Emotional Wellbeing. Wellsource, Inc. 2006.; Managing Stress? American Heart Association. AHA Website. 2006.