



SUGGESTIONS FOR CONTROLLING STRESS

1. GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Lack of sleep can lead to exhaustion, which decreases your ability to handle stress. A good night's sleep allows you to tackle the day's stress easier. Practicing good sleep hygiene along with stress-lowering tactics can help improve your quality of sleep.

2. EXERCISE REGULARLY

Regular exercise relaxes your muscles and your mind for an overall sense of well being.

3. EAT A BALANCED DIET

Good nutrition from a variety of foods helps you maintain healthy weight, leads to a positive self-image and helps you cope better with stress.

4. PLAN AHEAD TO ENJOY SPECIAL DAYS

Make a note on your calendar to prepare ahead of time for birthdays and holidays. This may allow time for you to enjoy in the celebrations.

5. CUT DOWN ON ALCOHOL

People who drink less alcohol tend to be more stress resistant. Managing stress makes it easier to cut back on alcohol.

6. RELAX YOUR BODY

Once a day, tense and then slowly relax muscle groups throughout your body. Work from your head to your toes.

7. RELAX YOUR MIND

Take time out a few minutes daily. Meditate, daydream, and listen to music – whatever is best for you.

8. TAKE AN IMAGINARY VACATION

Close your eyes and picture a quiet scene on a mountain, in a meadow or by the ocean. Imagine yourself relaxing in your ideal location.

9. LEAVE FIVE MINUTES EARLY

Plan to be on time for meetings and other commitments. Avoid needless pressure from rushing.

10. REHEARSE FOR STRESSFUL EVENTS

Before you go or do something that you feel will bring on anxiety, visualize being calm and peaceful.

11. **TALK IT OUT**

Use your personal support system; family, friends, co-workers or mental health counselor to unload.

12. **GET INVOLVED**

Being with and helping others may distract you from your own problems.

13. **COUNT TO 10**

When something makes you angry, give your body time to defuse before you react. Ask yourself: "Will this really matter in the future?"

14. **BLOW IT AWAY**

After a stressful event, hold still and take a few breaths to help your body recover from whatever caused you stress and anxiety.

15. **LAUGH OUT LOUD**

It's a great way to release stress. It also gives your heart and lungs a mini aerobic workout. Read a comic book, see a comedy show or enjoy a funny joke with friends.

16. **ADJUST YOUR MINDSET**

How you describe a certain event can actually influence the stressful experience it will bring to you. Call a "deadline" a "finish line" or a "problem" a "new opportunity".

17. **SPOIL YOURSELF**

The kinder you are to yourself, the more stress resistant you will be. Do something nice for yourself every now and then. Do things that bring you joy and help you relax; get a massage, see a movie, join a yoga class.

18. **TAKE A "HAPPINESS INVENTORY"**

Focus on the positive. At the end of each day, jot down the good things that happened. You may be surprised at how much good occurred.

19. **LIMIT CAFFEINE**

Too much caffeine can leave you irritable and nervous, disrupt your sleep and digestion and leave you more vulnerable to stress.

20. **GET HELP IF YOU NEED IT**

Speak to your doctor or a professional counselor if you're unable to control stress. Don't let the stress control you.