



RECOMMENDATIONS TO MINIMIZE 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 challenges more easily. Practicing good sleep hygiene (no screens 30 minutes before bedtime), along with stress-lowering tactics, can help improve your quality of sleep. If you're still feeling tired during the day, consider taking a 15-30 minute power nap.

2. EXERCISE REGULARLY

Regular exercise relaxes your muscles and your mind for an overall sense of well-being. Although you may be unable to go to the gym at this time, there are a variety of free exercise classes that are offered on YouTube and other virtual platforms. If you belong to a gym or studio, see if they are offering online courses.

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 HELP STAY POSITIVE

Create a daily agenda to help you stay positive, focused and feeling productive. Seeing what you want to accomplish for the day will help you feel more organized and less stressed. Plus, you'll have a feeling of satisfaction every time you cross something off your list.

5. MANAGE POTENTIAL ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS

Be mindful of using alcohol and other substances as a coping mechanism during these stressful times. People who drink and smoke less tend to be more stress resistant. Conversely, healthily managing stress makes it easier to cut back on drinking and smoking.

6. RELAX YOUR BODY AND MIND

Give yourself a 10-minute time out at least once per day. Relax your mind by meditating, daydreaming, or listening to music – whatever is best for you. Relax your body by tensing and then slowly relaxing various muscle groups throughout your body, working from your head to your toes.

7. TAKE AN IMAGINARY TRIP

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.

8. CREATE A GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Begin and end each day by identifying something you're grateful for. It could be anything from your family, to the sun, a glass of water, or life itself. Finding gratitude in the small things that we often take for granted can shift our thinking to be more positive, resulting in feeling less stressed.

9. REMIND YOURSELF THAT THIS IS TEMPORARY

When you're feeling overwhelmed with the news about COVID-19, remind yourself that better days are to come and we will all get through this together.

10. **TALK IT OUT**

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

11. **STAY CONNECTED**

Social distancing doesn't mean emotional distancing. Stay connected with loved ones via phone, text, and FaceTime.

12. **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?"

13. **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.

14. **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, watch a funny movie or show, or enjoy sharing a funny joke or meme with friends.

15. **ADJUST YOUR MINDSET**

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

16. **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; watch a movie or purchase an online exercise membership.

17. **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 that is good has occurred.

18. **DO SOMETHING NEW**

We suddenly have more time on our hands than ever before. Take advantage of this free time to do something you've always wanted to do! Enroll in that online class, learn a new language, or try a new recipe.

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

Speak to your doctor or a mental health counselor if you're unable to control your stress. Don't let the stress control you. Feel free to reach out to MAP at 212-701-9620, or email mapinfo@uft.org to confidentially speak with a counselor about how we can support you.