

Stress Management

How to reduce, prevent, and cope with stress

Stress management strategy #6:

Adopt a healthy lifestyle

You can increase your resistance to stress by strengthening your physical health.

- **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.
- **Eat a healthy diet-** Well-nourished bodies are better prepared to cope with stress, so be mindful of what you eat. Start your day right with breakfast, and keep your energy up and your mind clear with balanced, nutritious meals throughout the day.
- **Reduce caffeine and sugar-** The temporary “highs” caffeine and sugar provide often end with a crash in mood and energy. 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.
- **Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs-** Self-medicating with alcohol or drugs may provide an easy escape from stress, but the relief is only temporary. Don’t avoid or mask the issue at hand; deal with problems head on and with a clear mind.
- **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.

You hear a lot about living a healthy lifestyle, but what does that mean? In general, a healthy person doesn’t smoke, is at a healthy weight, eats healthy and exercise. Sounds simple, doesn’t it? The trick to healthy living is making small changes...taking more steps, adding fruit to your cereal, having an extra glass of water, parking further away at the grocery store... these are just a few ways you can start living healthy without drastic changes. In fact, drastic changes almost always lead to failure. Making small changes in how you live each day can lead to big rewards, so figure out what you can do to be healthy today.

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*“Be who you are and say what you feel,
because those who mind don't matter,
and those who matter don't mind”*

-Dr. Seuss