



Ten Tips for Combating Stress



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1. Believe in your ability to cope. Embrace your strengths. Remind yourself that you can influence the outcome of events in your life. Create action plans to address problems at work and at home.
2. Learn relaxation exercises. Try deep breathing, visualization and meditation. A hot bath, a walk in the park and stretching exercises are also good stress relievers.
3. Get a grip on guilt. Guilt robs us of our energy and motivation. Be realistic about your expectations of yourself at home and on the job. It's neither possible, nor desirable, to try to be a perfect parent or employee.
4. Talk to a friend. Talking about problems can help us blow off steam and give us the perspective we need to solve them more easily.
5. Develop leisure activities. Practice a craft, learn to play a musical instrument, join a community choir or a weekly bridge game.
6. Establish a regular exercise routine. Stress produces chemicals that make you feel tense. Exercise helps move these chemicals through our bodies. Try to get at least 20 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week. Choose a fun exercise you'll enjoy and stick with.
7. Get plenty of rest. Most people need seven or eight hours of sleep a night to feel renewed and refreshed. If you have trouble sleeping, increase your exercise routine. Take a warm shower before bed.
8. Eat a balanced diet. Stock up on bread, cereal, rice and pasta. Include lots of fruits and vegetables in your diet. Add calcium, in the form of milk, yogurt and cheese, and two to three servings per day of protein from meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs or nuts. Use fats, oils and sweets sparingly.
9. Improve your communication skills. Learn to ask for help when you need it. Defuse misunderstandings before they occur by talking things over with your coworkers, spouse and children.
10. Learn to accept and adapt to change. Change is a fact of life. Major work and life changes are common. Whether you welcome or dread these changes, they can all be extremely stressful unless you learn to adjust to them. Take time to recover, refocus and regenerate during a major change, such as promotion, relocation, parenthood or divorce.