

Soothing ways to ease stress



Get tips to help you manage stress in a healthy way — so you can take on the day.

Stress can show itself in many ways. When something stressful happens, you may feel anger, frustration, sorrow, disbelief, guilt or disappointment. You can probably add other emotions to this list.

You can't always control what happens around you. But you can become aware of how you perceive stress and learn to control how you react to it.

Let's look at some ways you can calm yourself down when you're feeling frazzled.

- 1. Slow down.** Taking a few deep breaths and counting to 10 *can* help relieve the symptoms of stress on the spot. Deep breaths and pausing before acting can slow your rapid breathing. It can give you valuable seconds to think about how you're going to respond to a stressful situation.
- 2. Enjoy simple pleasures.** Think about what really relaxes you. Is it being alone with a good book? Driving in the country? Sharing lunch with a friend? Walking with your dog? Look for opportunities to do things you enjoy, even if it's just for 15 minutes every day.
- 3. Practice positive self-talk.** You may sometimes say to yourself, "Oh great, here I go again." Or, "I'll never get this done." Try flipping your thinking around to, "I'm not going to do *that* again," or "I'll just tackle one thing at a time." Frame your thinking around success, rather than failure.
- 4. Seize the moment.** Stressors can be unexpected, like being cut off in traffic, or a dispute at work. It might help to put together an emergency "tool kit" of healthy ways to respond to such things. Then you can feel relaxed and prepared for almost anything.

- 5. Let things go.** Some things aren't worth sweating over. Ask yourself, "Will this matter a month from now?" Try to set priorities, separating the big stuff from the small stuff. Let some of the small stuff go. Then reward yourself for a meaningful accomplishment — instead of being hard on yourself for not getting everything done.
- 6. Find reasons to laugh.** A sense of humor can put problems in a whole new light. Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself. As the saying goes, laughter just might be the best medicine.
- 7. Get enough rest and sleep.** Getting enough rest and sleep will also help you deal with everyday stressors.

Speak with a master's-level counselor 24 hours a day.

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