

# How Can I Manage Stress?

Stress is your body's response to change. It is a very individual thing, and it is not always bad. For example, speaking to a group or watching a close football game can be stressful, but they can be fun, too. **The key is to manage stress properly, because unhealthy responses to stress may lead to health problems in some people.**

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## How does stress affect you?

- Makes you feel angry, forgetful, anxious or helpless.
- Makes it hard to sleep or feeling tired without a good reason.
- Gives you aches in your head, neck, jaw, stomach and/or back.
- Leads to habits like smoking, drinking, overeating or drug abuse.
- You may not even feel it at all, even though your body suffers from it.



Stress can affect how you feel and how you act.

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Exercise can help you let go of the tension in your body.

## How can I cope with it?

- Take 15 minutes a day to sit quietly, breathe deeply and think of a peaceful picture.
  - Try to learn to accept things you cannot change. You do not have to solve all of life's problems.
  - Talk out your troubles and look for the good instead of the bad.
  - Exercise. Do what you enjoy — walk, swim, ride a bike or jog to get your big muscles going. (See attached Managing Stress Log)
  - Limit alcohol, do not overeat and do not smoke.
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## How can I live a more relaxed life?

- If you can, avoid things that upset you. For example, spend less time with people who bother you or avoid driving in rush-hour traffic.
- Think about problems and try to solve them. You could talk to your boss about difficulties at work, talk with your neighbor if his dog bothers you, or get help when you have too much to do.
- Change how you respond to difficult situations. Be positive, not negative.
- Learn to say "no." Do not promise too much.
- Give yourself enough time to get things done.



Small changes in your lifestyle can help you prevent stress.

**Talk to your doctor about how you can better manage the stress in your life.**

Reference: "Lower Stress: How Does Stress Affect the body?" Heart.org (July 2017)

### MANAGING STRESS LOG

Date/ Time	√ if it impacts your life	Sources of Stress	Rate: 1=low 10=high level of stress	Select M or P. M = manageable & write a strategy to manage it. P=preventable & write a strategy to prevent it.	Outcome (how well your strategies worked). If not, what you will change next time.	Circle Stress Relaxation techniques (mindfulness) you will do.
		Driving/Traffic				Awareness
		Chores/clutter				Be thankful
		Job/unemployment				Be positive
		Politics/current event				Laugh
		Moving/changing schools				Deep breathing
		Health/insurance/expenses				Listening
		Aging/death/grieving				Close your eyes
		Family/crying kids/divorce				Smile
		Safety/crime/natural disasters				Observation
		Finances/wedding/retirement				Appreciate