

**HRIC
HELPFUL
HINTS**

**STRESS
MANAGEMENT**

Stress is the body's way of responding to any kind of demand or threat. When a person feels threatened, the nervous system responds by releasing a flood of stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol, which rouse the body for emergency action. The heart pounds faster, muscles tighten, blood pressure rises, breath quickens, and your senses become sharper. These physical changes can increase one's strength and stamina, speed, reaction time, and enhance focus.

This is known as the "fight or flight" stress response and is the body's way of protecting the person. When working properly, stress helps a person stay focused, energetic, and alert. In emergency situations, stress can save one's life—giving one the extra strength to defend oneself when faced with a threatening situation. Beyond one's comfort zone, stress stops being helpful and can start causing major damage to one's mind and body. Unfortunately, the body's autonomic nervous system often does a poor job of distinguishing between daily stressors and life-threatening events. This in due course leaves one extremely vulnerable to a host of mental and emotional problems.

Stress management is the process used by individuals to control and essentially manage their levels of stress. Such process encompasses techniques and strategies used to achieve lower and better managed levels of stress.

Top 10 tips on managing stress

- Be mindful of your breathing. While under stress we tend to find our breathing shallow hence increasing our physiological response to stress. Learn to breathe deep breaths while being mindful of your breathing
- Do something physical that you enjoy. You can exercise, go for a walk, dance or any other activity that disconnects you from your stressful state of mind
- Understand your environment and your stress triggers and begin to work on dealing with them from a root cause perspective. For example if it's a negative job situation then perhaps looking for another job is in order.

- Develop a proper self-care regime and make it a priority. Learn to get enough sleep, eat right and create personal time.
- Learn to ask for support when needed. You may need to delegate to others or might need to reach out to someone to talk discuss your stress
- Be assertive. Learn to communicate your thoughts, ideas and feelings effectively. Do not assume people are mind readers and they know what you want. As well learn to say no when something is not right or good for you
- Detox your relationships. Identify unhealthy relationships in your life that could potentially be causing you stress and understand what is draining your energy in that relationship. It is not about kicking people out of your life, rather about changing the negative and toxic dynamics of that relationship.
- Practice mindful meditation. Work on learning to stay in the moment and disconnecting from the world around you
- Technology free time. Allocate time to disconnect from technology; from your phone, social media and email.
- Practice gratitude. In a state of stress it is easy for us to lose sight of the good in our life. Learn to allocate time in your day to identify 3 things you are grateful for in your life or even in your day.



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