Stress Reduction

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF Lifestyle Medicine

Stress is a part of life, but how we think about it and respond to it can change how it affects our health and self-care. While medication might help with stress, there are plenty of things you can do to manage it and boost your overall well-being. Working with your healthcare team can help you create a plan to reduce stress. Ask them about Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) for more support.

Self-Management Tips

- Connect with others
- Get involved in activities
- Try different healthy ways to relax (music, exercise, dance, meditation or yoga)
- Take time for fun, creative activities or hobbies
- Keep a gratitude journal or write about stressful events
- Take care of spiritual needs
- Make time to laugh (comedy, joke books etc)
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol
- Try deep breathing techniques
- Get a massage



Good Stress/Bad Stress

Not all stress is harmful; some stress can actually help us finish important tasks, study for exams, speak in public, or reach tough goals. However, distress, or negative stress, is the kind that can cause anxiety, lower performance, and harm our mental and physical health. What causes distress varies from person to person, so it's important to identify what triggers it for you. Once you know, you can create a plan to manage, cope with, or change how you view those situations.

See Stress Differently

Look at events or triggers from a different angle. Consider "Is there another way to look at this situation?" and remember it's not helpful to focus on what cannot be changed. Try to improve your mood by looking at what is going well in life. Focus on your accomplishments or what you have overcome.

Stress Reduction Goals

Setting goals around stress management is a great way to decrease any negative impact stress may have on your health. It's often easier to achieve positive goals. An example of a positive stress management goal is, "I will write about what I am thankful for at least 10 minutes three times per week."

Specific - What would you like to change?

Measurable - By how much will you change?

Achievable - Will you be inspired or overwhelmed by this goal?

Realistic - Can you visualize success? (think about improvement over perfection)

Time-bound - How often or for how long will you make this change?

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