

HEALTHY LIVING



Stress-Relief Strategies

Although occasional stress can help improve our focus and performance, living with chronic stress can backfire by causing anxiety, depression and other problems. We can better manage our stress by understanding who we are, recognizing our struggles, putting them in perspective, and taking action where possible. Following are basic strategies that can improve stress tolerance and help lessen the effects of stress on our health.

Think Positively

When optimism is hard to muster, cognitive-behavioral therapy, which trains people to recognize negative thinking patterns and replace them with more constructive ones, can also help reduce the risk of chronic stress and depression.

Get Out and Enjoy Nature

While modern civilization has made our lives more convenient, it has deprived us of an essential source of stress relief—connection with nature. Studies show that interacting with nature can help lessen the effects of stress on the nervous system, reduce attention deficits, decrease aggression, and enhance spiritual well-being.

Use Humor to Find Perspective

Humor relieves stress and anxiety and prevents depression, helping put our troubles in perspective. Laughter can help increase pain tolerance, enhance mood and creativity, and lower blood pressure, potentially improving treatment outcomes for a number of health problems.

Build a Support System

Relationships are key to health and happiness in both men and women, and loneliness may contribute to stress. Building a social support system helps people maintain a higher quality of life. Today's technologies, such as email, texting and Zoom calls, make it easier than ever to stay connected.

Employ the Relaxing Power of Music

Music, especially classical, can serve as a powerful stress-relief tool. Listening to relaxing music can help us avoid anxiety and an increased heart rate and blood pressure. Singing and listening to music can also reduce anxiety and depression. A dose of calming music may lower stress and anxiety.

Give Exercise a Shot

To get the best of both worlds, a calmer mind and improved physical condition, try exercise. Tai chi, which works for people of all ages, can reduce stress, while also improving balance and posture.

No matter which stress-relief methods you choose, make it a habit to use them—especially if you feel too stressed out to do it. As someone once said, the time to relax is when you don't have time for it!

For more information on prevention and wellness, or to find an ACA chiropractor near you, visit www.HandsDownBetter.org

Additional Resources:

- National Institute of Mental Health, <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress/index.shtml>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/stress-coping/index.html>



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