

Stress Relief: A Positive Lifestyle



Learning to manage stress doesn't happen overnight. It's a process. The more you keep at it, the more you'll feel in control of daily events.



Set limits

Trying to fit too much into a day is a major cause of stress. Setting limits will help you feel more in control. This sometimes means saying no—to people and even to things you might want to do. This can be hard at times. But knowing your priorities can help you make choices.

Know your priorities

Using your time and energy wisely is a good way to control stress. Save time for the things that matter most in your life. Ask yourself: Do I really need to do this? Do I want to do this? If you answer "yes," then go ahead. But keep in mind you can also answer "no." Consider writing down your responsibilities and ranking them from the most to the least important. This concrete exercise can help you develop a strategy for managing your time.

Learn to accept support

Everybody needs support every now and then. Don't feel embarrassed to accept or to ask for help when you need it. Most people are glad to lend a hand. And asking for help can open up new lines of communication and friendships.

Stress and children

Be careful not to take your stress out on your children. They may not understand why you're stressed. But they can sense your moods. Be aware that many children—especially teenagers—are under stress, too. Plan time to talk with your kids. Ask them about school and any problems they're having. When you talk with them, make certain you are "there." Don't check your phone, do turn the TV off, and give your attention only to them. Finally, make sure they have plenty of time to just be kids and have fun.

Be part of your community

If taking part in community or faith-based events reduces your stress, consider getting involved with an organization. If it's a good fit, it can offer a sense of belonging. It also helps put you in touch with active and caring people nearby. So whether it's a clean-up day at a local park or taking meals to the elderly, try to reach out to friends and neighbors. Just remember: Make sure it's an activity that reduces, not increases your stress.

Taking time for yourself, even if that means going for a walk by yourself, is important for your well-being and that of your children. Don't hesitate to decrease, rather than increase, your obligations.

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