# Stress Solutions

Now that we've established that stress is an everyday part of life and can be unhealthy, many people might be questioning what they can do to reduce the risk of the adverse effects of stress. There are many ways to manage stress. Listed here are a few common techniques that have been found to be effective.

**To Prevent Stress** (the best defense is a good offense)

**Manage your time wisely**

Time management is one of the most important things involved in preventing stress. Stress will occur when a person feels that they have no control over a situation. By planning ahead a person will feel that they have control over what they will do and when. It will also eliminate the panic attacks associated with the realization that there is too much to do and not enough time to do it. Also, by planning ahead, you will be able to make better use of your time, therefore have time left over to relax and enjoy yourself.

**Monitor your Diet**

When you are physically healthy, your body is better equipt to fight off stress. Knowing this, it only makes sense to maintain a healthy diet. Caffeine is a common culprit in the diet area. Since caffeine can cause nervousness, insomnia, irritability, and headaches, it can throw your body out of balance, inducing a stress reaction. This is just one example of how an imbalance in your body, due to diet, can not only intensify stress, but cause it.

**Exercise Regularly**

Exercise has been proven over and over again to reduce stress levels. By participating in a regular exercise program, not only are you becoming more physically fit, which makes your body better able to cope with stress, but you are reducing levels of anxiety, helplessness, depression, and hostility. Exercise is considered one of the most powerful weapons against stress, both physically and psychologically, so just do it!

**Get Enough Sleep**

By cheating yourself of much needed sleep, you are practically inducing stress. Not only are you physically less prepared to deal with stress, but your emotional capability goes down to. If you are tired and crabby from lack of sleep, your emotions will not be able to handle being stressed. This will cause a quick burnout during a stressful situation. A burnout will only deteriorate your physical condition more than the exhaustion has. Becoming sick and missing school or work will cause you to fall behind on the things you need to get done. This will just cause more stress. It will become a nasty cycle, which can all be prevented by getting enough sleep each night.

**Visual Imagery**

Everyone has seen sports figures standing off by themselves with their eyes closed and bodies moving right before a big event. Most of these athletes are reducing stress by imagining everything they are about to do. By running through a speech or performance in your mind before you actually have to do it, you can help reduce your anxiety and stress. Doing this will give you a sense of control over whatever is about to happen. You feel you are better able to manage what is going to happen.

**Getting Rid of Stress**

**Laugh**

Yes, it's true. By simply laughing, you can help to reduce the level of stress you are experiencing."... Subsequent research has shown that laughing can indeed be thought of as internal jogging: Laughing increases respiratory exchange, heart rate, musclar activity and body temperayure, and it stimulates the production of beta-endorphins, the chemicals some researchers believe are responsible for 'runner's high.' Recent studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara found that laughter was as effective in reducing stress as complex biofeedback training programs." (Constable)All of which will help to reverse the negative effects caused by the body's natural defense to stressOverall, laughing will reduce physical stress and make you feel better about the situation

**Cry**

Everyone has experienced the feeling of relief after a good cry. Not only does crying give you a release for pent up emotions, but it helps clear your mind. It also has a physically significant impact. A study found that tears from people in an emotionally stressful situation had a significantly higher level of protein than tears from people exposed to onion vapors. This suggests that tears may help to remove chemicals that build up during an emotionally stressful situation. Crying is a stress reliever, both physically and emotionally.

**Stretching**

Stretching out tense muscles not only feels good, but can help to eliminate stress. In the act of stretching, you are improving your posture and circulation, which both help to reduce the physical effects of stress. It also reduces muscular tension in your body. Relieving muscular pain will help you to relax and lower stress levels.