

Resources for Managing Physical Demands

Excessive stress can affect our health, ability to sleep, and ability to handle temptation. Good nutrition and exercise help us manage stress better. If you are having physical challenges, prayerfully choose one or two suggestions that seem right for you. Not every suggestion will work for every person, but most ideas must be practiced for at least two to three weeks to begin to be helpful. Look in the “General Principles for Managing Stress” section on pages 17–22 for additional suggestions.

A

Learning to work hard

- **Break down big or difficult tasks into smaller pieces.** If they still feel too hard, break them down more. Then act. If you wait to “feel like” working before starting, you may wait a long time. Get started, and motivation will follow.
- **Pace yourself.** Vary the work you do, and don’t work too long at just one activity. Remind yourself: All I have to do right now is _____.
- **Get enough sleep, healthy food, water, and exercise to have the stamina you need.**
- **Look for and welcome support, suggestions, and encouragement from others.** Support and encourage others as well.
- **Express gratitude.** Be grateful not only for your blessings but for your challenges and adversities and what you can learn from them. This will open the door for the Lord to bless and help you.

B

Staying Healthy and Energetic

- **Study and apply Doctrine and Covenants 89.**
- **Ask for a priesthood blessing.**
- **Follow the *Missionary Health Guide* to strengthen your immune system.** Get to bed on time. Drink 6–12 glasses of clean water per day, depending on the climate. Except when fasting, don’t skip meals, especially breakfast. Avoid sugar. Take a multivitamin each day. Eat some protein each day (for example, nuts, tofu, beans, milk, yogurt, cheese, eggs, fish, poultry, meat). Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer, especially if your companion is ill. Don’t let food sit around that should be refrigerated—when in doubt, toss it out.
- **Exercise regularly.** Thirty minutes of exercise each day strengthens your immune system, increases your energy, and stabilizes your mood. If you walk or bike all day, do something different for your exercise. (See *Preach My Gospel*, viii.)
- **Dress for the weather.** If it is unusually hot or humid, break up your missionary activities so you can spend 30–60 minutes in the shade or in air conditioning. Run cool water over your wrists or neck to cool down, and wear sunblock and light clothing. If it is cold, wear layers, gloves, and a hat (most body heat is lost through the head). In general, follow the direction received from your mission president regarding the climate you work in.
- **Keep your apartment clean and dust free.** This is especially important if you have frequent colds or allergies. Wash towels and sheets regularly to reduce allergens. A clean apartment will also lift your spirits.

C

Managing Head, Stomach, or Muscle Pain

- **Practice physical relaxation.** This may help reduce physical symptoms like headaches, stomachaches, diarrhea, back pain, joint pain, racing heart, trouble catching your breath, or feelings of panic. To train your body to relax, practice the progressive relaxation exercise (page 19) or the breathing exercise (page 18) every day for at least three weeks. Also, when you have symptoms or feel overstressed, use these skills to reduce tension and feel calmer.
- **Break your work into small pieces, and take on only one task at a time.** At each step, remind yourself, “All I have to do right now is ____.” For example, “All I have to do right now is call the ward mission leader” or “All I have to do right now is get dressed for the day.”
- **Keep a log for a week.** This will help you see when your physical symptoms occur (see example above). Look for patterns. For example, you might notice you are more likely to feel ill:
 - Under certain circumstances (such as on Sundays, when you are around leaders, or when you haven’t eaten for several hours).
 - When you think a certain way (such as when you think about transfers or think you should have done something better).
 - When you have certain feelings (such as anxiety about making phone calls or anger you don’t want to talk about).

See if there is a way to alter the situation (like carrying healthy snacks with you), change your thoughts (see “Talking Back to Negative Thinking” on page 21), or calm your feelings (see “Responding Positively to Stress” on page 17). Find more suggestions under “Resources for Managing Emotional Demands” on pages 29–34.

Keep a Log

Keep a log of physical symptoms you experience, as in the example below. Look for patterns to help you identify things you can change to reduce the anxiety that leads to symptoms.

Date	Time	Symptoms	Rate 1–5	Where/Doing what	Who with	Thinking / Feeling	What Would Help
4/10	3 pm	Headache	4	Walking home from church - Kim family didn't come & they cancelled appt. tonight	Elder Jimenez	Wondering if the Kims will ever come to church - frustrated about appt - hungry	Stop worrying about things I can't control
4/17	7 am	Headache	4	Companion study - trying to prepare lesson for Peter	Elder Jones	Is Peter really going to agree to be baptized	Do what you can, let God make up the difference
4/21	8 pm	Headache	3	Missionary Correlation Mtg - talking about member fellowshipping	Elder Jones Bro. Winn	I hope I don't get transferred after all this work with the members	Do my best, let God make up the difference
4/25	11 am	Headache, not too bad	2	Apartment - making phone calls	Elder Jones	Feeling apprehensive about contacting Kims and finding members to come with us	Getting better and doing my best and realizing what I can and can't control

- **Seek medical attention.** If symptoms persist or you are injured, consult with your mission president to receive medical help.
- **Forget yourself.** If you notice thoughts like “I’m going to forget what to say” or “I am making a fool of myself,” remind yourself that everyone makes mistakes, and the Lord chooses to work through the weak and simple (see D&C 1:24–28).

D

Sleeping, Going to Bed on Time

- **Unwind and relax during the last hour of the day.** Write in a journal, have a light snack like milk or fruit, listen to appropriate music, talk to your companion, or practice relaxation skills. If you often have work to do during this hour, get a second alarm clock and set it for 30 minutes before you should go to bed. When it goes off, stop work. Begin to relax and prepare for bed.
- **Don’t nap if you have trouble sleeping.** Doing so may cause you to not be tired enough to sleep at night. Go to bed on time instead. If you do nap, don’t sleep more than 20 minutes.
- **Follow a routine each night.** This will train your body that it is time to sleep. For example, use the progressive relaxation exercise on page 19. It may be helpful to refrain from doing anything in bed (like reading or eating) except sleeping.
- **Write a list of what is keeping you awake.** Then set it aside, putting your mind at rest that you won’t forget something important. Remind yourself that you will work out specific plans in the morning. Focus your nightly prayers on gratitude and reporting what you learned that day.
- **Warm up or cool down.** It is more difficult to sleep if you are too hot or too cold. Take a cool shower or get an extra blanket.
- **Avoid sugar or exercise for an hour before bedtime.**
- **Don’t worry about not sleeping.** If you relax your muscles and thoughts, you will be resting even if you are not sleeping.
- **Block out light as much as possible, and mask noise by running a fan or wearing earplugs.** Even a little light or noise keeps some people awake.

“Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated.”

—Doctrine and Covenants 88:124

E

Getting Up on Time

- **First, get to bed on time.** If you are not getting enough sleep, go to bed 30 minutes earlier. (See *Preach My Gospel*, viii.)
- **Get regular exercise.** After three to four weeks of exercising 30 minutes a day, you may notice you need less sleep. As your body gets stronger, it has more energy and relaxes more easily. (See *Preach My Gospel*, viii.)
- **Avoid sugar before bedtime.** Doing so may help you feel less groggy in the morning.
- **Plan positively.** Each night at 9:00 p.m., plan for a positive, productive morning so you will feel more like facing it. Review your plan with the Lord in prayer. Write down promptings or ideas that come to mind as you pray, and prepare to act on them. Daily planning can allow your mind to more fully relax as you go to sleep.
- **Program your brain.** Tell yourself the night before what time you want to wake up.

- **Get a timer and attach it to a light.** Set the timer to turn the light on 15–20 minutes before it is time to get up. Light signals your brain to wake up.

“And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint. And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. Amen.”

—Doctrine and Covenants 89:18–21

F

Eating Healthy Foods

- **Get ideas from mission leaders.** Ask them about recipes and healthy foods in your area.
- **Plan before shopping.** Make a plan for meals and healthy snacks before you shop for food.
- **Eat a variety of foods.** Aim for at least five fruits or vegetables each day, if available.
- **Eat protein each day.** Foods high in protein include nuts, beans, tofu, milk, yogurt, cheese, eggs, fish, poultry, and meat.
- **Reduce sugar and avoid caffeine.** Both tend to make people moody and tired in the long run.
- **Drink water and other liquids.** Stay hydrated by drinking 6–12 glasses per day, depending on the climate.

Record in your planner

- Healthy snacks you like
- Relaxing evening routines
- Progress with improving health habits

- **Lose weight gradually.** If trying to lose weight, don’t try to lose more than one to two pounds (one kilogram) per week, and drink extra water.

G

Getting Motivated to Exercise

- **Pray for the desire to exercise if you have trouble getting motivated.** Then start by telling yourself you only have to do five minutes. Motivation usually follows action. In other words, we become more motivated once we get started.
- **Remind yourself of the benefits of exercise.** Imagine having better immunity, increased energy, better stress management, improved mood, and better weight management. These benefits even come to people who don’t really like exercise.
- **Make it a game.** While you exercise, plan a fun service project, work out to approved music, or share favorite mission stories with your companion. Keep a scorecard and reward yourself for meeting your exercise goals by taking time on preparation day to go to a park, restaurant, or store.
- **Find a type of exercise you enjoy (or dislike least).** For example, you might march to approved music, jog with your companion, jump rope, stretch, or do push-ups, sit-ups, or yoga.

“And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.”

—Ether 12:27

