



# Is stress stressing you?

Life can be hard. Everyday activities may bring situations that cause stress. But there are ways to deal with it before it harms you.

## It's sneaky.

Our body often tells us we're stressed before our mind realizes we may be heading into trouble. Do you have sleeping problems? Feel tense? Have an unexplained headache, upset stomach or low energy? These are signs that stress and its symptoms may be turning into a full-blown problem.

### The physical discomfort of stress can also go hand in hand with behavior and mood effects.

Long-term stress can make you feel:

- ☑ Unhappy
- ☑ Lonely
- ☑ Anxious
- ☑ Overwhelmed
- ☑ Angry
- ☑ Unfocused

Physically, ongoing (prolonged or repeated) stress can lead to high blood pressure, breathing trouble, skin or stomach problems, pain and a weakened immune system.<sup>1</sup>

### What are we feeling so worked up about?

The American Psychological Association's annual survey<sup>2</sup> reports that money and work top the list. Concerns about our country's future, politics, violence and crime can also keep us up at night.

### Stress is a normal part of life.

It gives us that much-needed boost to get a big project done or alert us to a dangerous situation. Stress itself is not a problem as long as we keep its effects at bay. Still, many of us do not discuss ways to manage stress with our doctors.<sup>1</sup>

## Here are some stress management techniques<sup>3</sup> for a more peaceful life



1

### 1 Get a good night's rest

Follow a bedtime routine. Commit to a regular lights-out and wake-up schedule to refresh your body and mind.



4

### 2 Build physical activity into your daily routine

Exercise delivers feel-good endorphins and improves physical health and mental well-being.

### 3 Relax and breathe deeply

Become aware of your senses, focus on your breath and relax your muscles to help soothe your nerves.

### 4 Vent your thoughts and feelings

Write in a journal or talk to a friend or therapist—don't bottle up your emotions. Talking about stress is the best way to release it. It can also help you find the source and ways to relieve it.



6

### 5 Do activities you enjoy

Don't make life "all work and no play." Have hobbies, go on adventures and take care of yourself.

### 6 Adopt healthy habits

Eat well-balanced meals and limit your alcohol intake for healthy well-being.

### 7 Set priorities and boundaries

Decide what you must get done and say "no" to what you feel is too much.

## Making big changes is always tough, so start small

Combating stress means taking a good, hard look at how we spend our time and energy. We often think to check in with our friends, our kids and even our Facebook account. But when was the last time you checked in with yourself?

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/stress>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/index.aspx>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.nih.gov/health-information/emotional-wellness-toolkit>