

How Can You Lower Your Stress?

- Chronic stress can increase anxiety, depression, and tiredness
- Stress makes sleep, memory, concentration, and mood worse
- Learning healthy coping strategies helps improve mental well-being and resilience

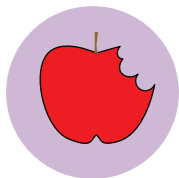


Tips for Lowering Your Stress Levels



Breathe & Relax Your Body

- Try slow breathing: breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4, breathe out for 4
- Relax your muscles: squeeze them tight for 5 seconds, then let go
- Mindful moments: take 5 minutes to focus only on your surroundings



Improve Sleep & Eating Habits

- Try to follow good sleep habits (see “How Can You Get Better Sleep?”)
- Drink plenty of water—not drinking enough can make stress worse
- Try to eat fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein to keep your energy up



Take Care of Yourself

- Take short breaks every day: go for a walk, listen to music, or just sit quietly
- Do an activity that requires focus to take your mind off your stress like puzzles, art, hobbies, or cooking
- Planning fun activities—even small ones—can help when you feel stressed. It gives your brain something good to look forward to and boosts mood



Stay Connected

- Spend time with friends, family, or pets for emotional support
- Talking about stress lowers its impact—don’t keep it bottled up
- Join a support group or talk to a therapist if stress feels like too much



Move Your Body

- Physical activity reduces stress hormones like cortisol and boosts endorphins
- Try daily walks, yoga, or stretching—even 10 minutes helps
- Aim to finish intense workouts 2 hours before bed so your body can relax



Control Your Stress

- When you have a big job to do, break it into smaller parts to make it easier
- Write down what makes you stress to understand it better. Do this in 10 minutes or less so you avoid thinking about it too much
- Watch less news and spend less time on social media



How Can You Lower Your Stress?

Things You Should Avoid

AVOID



Skipping meals



Drinking alcohol to feel less stressed



Keeping feelings inside

Relying on caffeine



Giving yourself too much work

- **Skipping meals or relying on caffeine for energy** – these make your body and mind even more stressed
- **Drinking alcohol or smoking to feel better when stressed** – this makes you feel more stressed later on
- **Keeping feelings inside** – talking to others helps process stress
- **Doing too much without taking rest** – this can make you very tired and stressed

Wrong Ideas People Often Believe About Stress

“If I take a vacation, my stress will go away.”

TRUTH: Breaks are helpful, but long-term stress management requires daily habits, not just temporary getaways. Try to do the above tips every day.

“If I don’t feel stressed, I must not have any stress.”

TRUTH: Even if you don’t “feel” stressed, symptoms like headaches, fatigue, or digestive issues may be signs of chronic stress.

“Stress is always bad for you.”

TRUTH: Not all stress is harmful! Short-term stress can improve focus and motivation. Chronic stress, however, can negatively affect your mental and physical health.

When to Talk to Your Health Professional

- If stress is causing physical symptoms like headaches, digestive issues, or shortness of breath
- If stress often leads to sadness, hopelessness, or loss of interest in activities you used to love
- If stress is causing frequent conflicts, affecting performance at work/school, or isolating you from others in your life who are important to you
- If you rely on alcohol, drugs, overeating, or avoidance due to stress



Neuroscience Education Institute

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