

Don't let stress get the best of you

Six ways to sideline it whenever it hits



Too much stress can affect your health. Use the following tips to help keep stress from getting the best of you.

1. Mind your health

No one can completely avoid stress, but physical activity, good nutrition and plenty of rest can help you keep your energy level high and ready to face life's challenges.

2. Reduce stressors

Make a list of the things in your life that cause you stress. Beside each one, write down one or two ways you can lessen the stress and then work toward those goals. If you have trouble finding solutions, talk with your doctor.

3. Plan ahead

Stress can be caused by having too many things to do, in too short a period of time. Instead, break larger projects into smaller, more manageable tasks; delegate at work and at home when you can. Set priorities. Spend the most time on those things you feel are important and less time on things that are lower priorities.

4. Be positive

If you demand too much of yourself or let negative thoughts run through your mind, you're setting yourself up for added stress. Each time this happens, take a minute to redirect your thoughts to something more positive.

5. Get away

When stress seems to be getting the better of you, take a break. Even a quick five-minute walk away from your office or home can help you relax.

6. Relax

Relaxation exercises, which combine deep breathing with releasing muscle tension, are simple to do anywhere and can help lessen the negative effects of a stressful situation.

Try the exercise below and talk with your doctor about others:

- Inhale through your nose slowly and deeply to the count of 10.
- Make sure that your stomach and abdomen expand, but your chest does not rise up.
- Exhale through your nose, slowly and completely, also to the count of ten.
- To help quiet your mind, concentrate fully on breathing and counting through each cycle.
- Repeat five to ten times. Make a habit of doing the exercise several times each day.

For more tips on how to reduce stress in your life, visit anthem.com, click on **Health and Wellness** and then **Health Topics**.

Source:
National Mental Health Association, Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

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