



stress less

Set realistic expectations, **focus on the present**, and don't worry about the future.

What is stress?

Everybody experiences stress. Stress is our natural response to a perceived threat. The body responds to stress by increasing heart rate, muscle tension, and blood pressure.

Helpful stress can give us energy in a crisis, and sometimes it even gives us the extra push we need to work our hardest.

Unhelpful stress is the feeling of being overwhelmed and behind on your tasks. This brochure contains tips to help manage your stress and hopefully reduce the unhelpful stressors in your life.

Symptoms of stress overload may include:

Cognitive Signs:

- Concentration and memory issues
- Generally negative attitudes or thoughts

Emotional Signs:

- Feeling overwhelmed or moody
- Irritability or inability to relax

Behavioral Signs:

- Changes in appetite
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities

Physical Signs:

- Muscle tension
- Weakened immune system

how stress can affect you

immediate stress management strategies

Deep Breathing: Take in deep slow breaths in through your nose out through your mouth. Relax your body with each breath. Continue until relaxed.

Progressive Relaxation: Get comfortable, either sitting or lying down. Tense up the muscles of your feet. Relax your feet and feel the

tension flow away. Breathe slowly and deeply. Progressively relax one muscle group at a time: lower legs, upper legs, abdomen, chest, neck, face, and head.

Visual Meditation: Get into a comfortable position and close your eyes. Imagine a peaceful place and picture it as vividly as your can. Incorporate as many sensory details as possible.

- 1 Learn to **say no** to requests that might add more stress to your life.
- 2 Have at least **one hour of quiet time** each day.
- 3 Engage in **activities that you enjoy** with people that you love.
- 4 Take a **break from technology**, such as your phone or computer.
- 5 Get at least **8 hours of sleep** daily.
- 6 Eat a **balanced diet and exercise** at least 3 times a week.
- 7 **Reduce caffeine and alcohol** intake.

long-term stress management strategies



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