



Stress Management

Stress can be defined as the brain's response to any demand. It is your body's reaction to the pressures of the world. We all have stress sometimes. What causes stress for one person may not be stressful for someone else.

Not all stress is bad. It can sometimes be helpful. But long-term stress can increase the risk of diseases like depression, heart disease and a variety of other problems. Your immunity may be lowered and your digestive, excretory and reproductive systems may stop working normally.

Effective stress management involves identifying and managing both acute and chronic stress.

COPING WITH STRESS CHECKLIST

- **Take one thing at a time** — Pick one urgent task and work on it.
- **Be realistic** — If you are overwhelmed, learn to say “no”.
- **Don’t try to be a superman/superwoman** — Don’t expect perfection from yourself.
- **Visualize** — Use your imagination to manage a stressful situation.
- **Meditate** — Five to ten minutes of quiet reflection can help.
- **Exercise** — 30 minutes daily helps both body and mind.
- **Hobbies** — Take a break and do something you enjoy.
- **Adopt a healthy lifestyle** — Get adequate rest, eat right, exercise, and balance work and play.
- **Share your feelings** — Don’t try and cope alone; connect with others for support and guidance.
- **Be flexible** — Be prepared to make allowances for other people’s opinions and to compromise. Arguing only increases stress.
- **Don’t be overly critical** — Remember, everyone is unique and has his or her own virtues and shortcomings.

Recognizing a problem is the first step toward solving it. By beginning to identify and understand the sources of your stress, you have taken the first step in learning to better manage it.

Manage it, not eliminate it. Stress is a fact of life.