

# Stress Management

Stress is the body's response to any demand made on it. Some forms of stress are normal and essential. It can provide the means to express talents and energies.

However, it can also cause exhaustion, illness, heart attacks and accidents.

As your body responds to physical or psychological stress, you experience an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and secretions of certain hormones. These responses will occur whether the stress is positive or negative.

## Recognizing stress

Stress is a process that builds. It's more effective to intervene early in the process rather than later. Try to become aware of indicators that suggest the process has begun. The following are signs that you may be experiencing stress:

- General irritability
- Elevated heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased accident proneness
- Feeling anxious for no specific reason
- Trembling
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Indigestion
- Pain in neck and/or lower back
- Changes in appetite or sleep pattern



# 10 Tips for How to Deal with Stress

1. Add at least 20 minutes of aerobic exercise. Physical activity increases endorphin levels, which are the “feel-good” chemicals.
2. Eat well-balanced meals, including more whole grains, nuts, fruits and vegetables.
3. Avoid caffeine, which may aggravate anxiety, insomnia, nervousness and trembling.
4. Reduce refined sugars. Too much sugar causes frequent changes in blood glucose levels, adding stress to the body’s physiological functioning.
5. Reduce alcohol and drug use. These substances may add to headaches and swelling, decrease coping mechanisms and add to depression.
6. Get at least seven hours of sleep nightly. Fatigue is a best friend to stress.
7. Take a warm bath or shower.
8. Hug someone or stroke a pet. Physical contact is a great way to relieve stress.
9. Don’t bottle it up; talk to someone you trust about the stress in your life.
10. Being unprepared and disorganized can make a difficult day or week even harder. Proper planning and organization can be a challenge, but the payoff will be well worth it.

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