



Stress Relief

Advice for a Healthy Lifestyle

Know Yourself

Recognize your symptoms of stress. Look at your life and see if anything can be changed to reduce the stress. Become more aware of stress-inducing situations by keeping a stress diary. This can help you to adopt effective coping strategies.

Sleep

Get enough rest and sleep. It is hard to accomplish things during the day when you are tired, and that can be stressful.

Talk About It

Talking about your problems to a sympathetic listener can provide you with support and guidance to help reduce stress and enhance well-being. It is also helpful to talk to others who may be experiencing the same thing you are. You are not alone. Talk to friends, professional counsellors, support groups or relatives about what is bothering you.

Relaxation

Use relaxation techniques (i.e. yoga, meditation, deep breathing, massage, aromatherapy, quiet reflection time, take a long bath, read a novel or listen to your favourite music).

Exercise

Regular physical activity is one of the best ways to manage stress. Talk to your doctor before you begin any new activities.

Time Management

Be realistic. Prioritize and list what you need to accomplish during the day and check off each item as you finish it. Time management is a key step to helping reduce stress levels. Also, learn to delegate tasks and responsibilities at home and at work, and learn to say 'No'.

Balanced Diet

Maintain a healthy, balanced diet. Alcohol, caffeine, sugar, fat, and tobacco all put a strain on your body's ability to cope with stress. Try to stop smoking and limit alcohol consumption.

Laugh

Have fun, laugh and be around people you enjoy being with. Laughter may boost your immune system and lower stress levels.

Your Time

Get away for a while (i.e. read a book, watch a movie, play a game, listen to music or go on vacation). Leave yourself some time that is just for you.



Budgeting

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Plan Ahead

A good rule when shopping for anything is to first figure out how much you can comfortably afford to spend (your budget) and what you really need to buy. Having a budget will prevent you from spending money impulsively on things you don't need.

Buy Only What You Need

When you go shopping, first buy all the basic supplies (i.e. things that you can't live without). Add up the prices and check the total against your budget. If you have money left over, you can add extra items to complement your basics.

Start With The Basics

Food is one of the most basic necessities. It's something you need, but probably spend more on than you realize.

- Find the lowest prices; store brands are usually cheapest.
- Use coupons and look for sales in store flyers.
- Cook from scratch and in large quantities. Freeze leftovers in meal-size portions to minimize the amount of waste.
- Limit the number of times you eat out or order in.

Visit Second-Hand Stores

These stores have some quality merchandise, such as clothing and home furnishings, that is still in good condition. You can also find good bargains at flea markets and garage/yard sales.

Free Activities

There are lots of free activities you can take advantage of with a little searching. Local newspapers have listings for performances, lectures, and discussion groups at public locations like libraries or schools.

Low-Cost Services

Vocational schools or colleges can be a great source of low-cost services. For example, beauty schools offer free or low-cost haircuts, while dental schools usually offer low-cost dental care to the public.

Websites

Many websites provide tips on how to save money.



Healthy Eating

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Eat a variety of foods from the 4 major food groups

Grain products (e.g., bread, pasta), vegetables and fruits, milk products (e.g., milk, yogurt, cheese) and meat. Choose lower fat alternatives whenever possible. The fat content of food is usually included on its packaging.

Cook healthy

Instead of frying, try a lower-fat cooking method, such as broiling, baking or grilling.

Portion control

Choose moderate-size portions as opposed to large-portion sizes. For example, the recommended size of a serving of meat is the size of a deck of playing cards. Refer to Canada's Food Guide for information on recommended serving sizes.

Enjoy satisfying eating without empty calories

Do you like to dip potato chips and taco chips that are high in fat? Instead try dipping raw vegetables for a change, they're tasty and easy to prepare.

Enjoy plenty of whole grains (breads, pastas), fruits and vegetables

Choose whole grain and enriched grain products more often (e.g., whole wheat bread) and choose from a variety of orange and green fruits and vegetables.

Don't deprive yourself

Have the occasional treat in controlled amounts. It can help prevent overeating later.

Note:

The amount of food needed for each individual varies with age, body size, activity level, gender, and if breast-feeding. These tips will help you maintain a healthy weight!



Good Conversation Skills

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Research

Before you meet with someone find out what the other person is interested in.

Breaking the ice

To break the ice, bring up simple and general topics such as the surroundings, the occasion that brings you together, how you know the mutual friend who introduced you or the weather.

Listen

Listen attentively while the other person is talking. Give exclusive attention to the person you are talking to. Try not to interrupt and wait for a pause when you are certain the other person has completed his thought.

Eye contact

Maintain eye contact by looking from the person's mouth, back to the eyes, and around the face, but never look away from the face. You may feel more comfortable looking between the person's eyes.

Be interested

Ask questions that lead the other person to talk about the things they enjoy or their achievements. Restrain your natural instinct to talk too much about yourself.

Topics of discussion

Family, school, hobbies, work, movies, books, entertainment, vacations, church, places you have lived, pets, sports, or other activities.

Read/Watch

To ensure that you have plenty to talk about watch or read the news and try to stay up on current events.

Remember

If you are meeting with someone for a second time, but don't know them very well, anything that you remember from your first meeting (i.e. they have kids, enjoy comedy, where they work, hobbies, etc.) can help kick-start the conversation.



Physical Activity

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Physical activity doesn't have to be boring and difficult. Try to make it fun by learning new sports and involving friends.

- Walk whenever you can.
- Get off the bus two stops early and walk home.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Reduce inactivity for long periods, like watching TV.
- Get up from the couch and stretch and bend for a few minutes every hour.
- Play actively with your kids.
- Walk, cycle or in-line skate to work, school or play.
- Find out about walking and cycling paths nearby and use them.
- Observe a physical activity class to see if you want to try it.
- Try one class to start – you don't have to make a long-term commitment.
- Do the activities you are doing now, more often.
- Dance to your favourite up-beat music for 10 minutes a day.
- Do a physical activity routine with leaders on TV.
- Join a club or organization that coordinates active living events.
- Get in the garden and dig, prune, rake and weed.
- Arrange to meet a couple of friends for a walk every day at the same time.
- Contract your stomach and back muscles while sitting in your chair or on the bus.
- Make a personal or family commitment to try a new activity each season: snowshoe, curl, hike, bike, dance, bowl, fish, camp, ice-skate, ski, swim, in-line skate, walk, run, skip rope, play tag with your kids, or play ball in the park.

Note:

Talk to your doctor before you begin any new activities.