



STRESS

Stress can be experienced mentally, emotionally, or physiologically. Do you know stress can actually be good for you? The *good* stress is known as eustress. This type of stress motivates us to overcome obstacles. *Bad* stress affects our ability to carry out our daily functions.

Signs of Stress

Over-stress reactions include a wide range of symptoms, including physical, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive (thought process) signs.

Physical symptoms:

- Stomach ache, headache, dizziness, eye strain
- Sleep problems (too little or too much)
- Problems concentrating

Feelings:

- Moodiness (Feeling low or depressed)
- Anxiety (Tense, nervous, jumpy, unable to relax)
- Irritable or hostile (Getting angry over minor things)
- Fearfulness (Afraid to make decisions)

Behaviors:

- Exaggerating normal behavior (hard workers turn into workaholics; quiet people become isolated)
- Withdrawing from others
- Working harder, but accomplishing less
- Blaming others and being overly critical
- Having frequent hostile conversations
- Arguing more often
- Lack of interest
- Having other family members with stress problems (Stress is contagious.)
- Pretending that nothing is wrong (denial)

Thoughts:

- This is horrible/unbearable. I'm not good enough.
- I'm going to go crazy.

Stress Management Strategies

1. Evaluate what you can do to change or eliminate the situation.
2. Step back momentarily from the situation if you cannot change or eliminate it.
3. Organize your priorities so you do not worry about the small items that are irrelevant. Setting realistic goals will eliminate unnecessary anxiety.
4. Modify your reactions to individual situations, which will allow you to focus on one issue at a time. Do not try to tackle everything at once.
5. Make sure you get enough rest. Not getting enough sleep can actually aggravate your level of stress.
6. Use the relaxation technique that is best for you. Meditation, breathing exercises, taking a walk, talking to a friend, yoga, and exercise are just a few options. Choose whatever healthy behavior makes you feel better!
7. Do something nice for someone. This activates a “feel good” feeling inside of us and brightens our attitude. It will shift the focus off of your worries.
8. Eat healthy—maintaining a good nutrition plan, exercise, and getting enough rest builds up your resistance to stress.
9. Eliminate behaviors that can lead to stressful situations. For example, rushing through things, only pretending to listen to someone, multitasking too many things, over scheduling yourself, ignoring when your body tells you it is tired, and clenching your jaws and muscles.
10. Learn to say, “No” to people or things that try to pull you in too many directions. Do not take on more than you can actually handle.
11. Make decisions instead of worrying about situations. Evaluate your options, how each makes you feel, the pluses and minuses of each, and make a decision.
12. Do not keep things bottled up! Sometimes just having a friend or loved one listen to your concerns can make you feel more at ease.
13. Let go of past mistakes and resentments. Learn from experiences instead of dwelling on them. You cannot proceed into the future if you hold onto the past.
14. In order to grow and evolve you need to let go of some control and give in to risk taking. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.
15. Try new things. Vacation somewhere you have always dreamed of going, try a new restaurant, or take up a new hobby.
16. Schedule some “alone” time. Giving yourself alone time away from everyone and everything else will allow you to reflect on your life and world around you. Get in touch with yourself though your thoughts, feelings, and senses.
17. Use time management to plan your daily responsibilities. Plan your tasks and appointments ahead of time while at the same time allowing some flexibility in your schedule.