



Manage Stress – A Focus on Stress Management



DECEMBER 2013 | *Monthly Topic*

Pay attention to your level of stress, which may increase during busy times such as holidays. Stress comes in many forms, and can have a negative effect on health if it continues too long or feels overwhelming. Many tools are available to help you manage and reduce your stress.

- **Manage Stress: A Healthy Living Message**
http://www.prevention.va.gov/Manage_Stress.asp
- **Manage Stress Workbook**
http://www.prevention.va.gov/MPT/2013/ManageStressWorkbook_Dec2013.pdf
- **Pleasant Activities Tip Sheet**
http://www.prevention.va.gov/MPT/2013/PleasantActivitiesTipSheet_Dec2013.doc
- **Relaxation Recordings (links to these recordings will be provided at a later date)**
- **Suicide Prevention**
http://www.prevention.va.gov/MPT/2013/SuicidePrevention_Dec2013.doc
- **Limit Alcohol: A Healthy Living Message**
http://www.prevention.va.gov/Limit_Alcohol.asp

BASIC STRESS MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS

- **Physical Activity**—This page links to more information on topics such as PTSD, suicide prevention, drug abuse, resources for returning service members, etc.
- **Problem Solving**—Learn problem solving skills as this can often improve your ability to cope. Your medical center may offer a class or information session on problem solving skills. There is also a web-based problem-solving program available to you and listed under Veteran Tools below.

- **Relaxation Training**—Learn relaxation and mindfulness skills. These skills can assist you to manage the arousal that is associated with stress, and daily relaxation may protect you from at least some of the consequences of stress.
- **Expression**—Speak up in respectful ways. Sharing thoughts and feelings in an assertive and respectful manner can sometimes help buffer stress. Keeping those thoughts inside can increase your stress.
- **Time Management**—List what needs to get done, make plans for addressing issues, and stick to the plan. There are several self-help books on time management at libraries and book stores.
- **Positive Thinking**—Stress is often associated with negative, self-critical thinking. Focus your attention on positive thoughts about yourself, favorite songs, poems, favorite prayers, or hobbies.
- **Pleasant Activities**—You may be experiencing the effects of stress if you are not making time for fun in your life. Plan to have regular, enjoyable activities and see if this buffers your stress. See Pleasant Activities Tip Sheet below.

MANAGING STRESS RESOURCES

- **Manage Stress Workbook**—This is a workbook developed by the National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP) that will guide you through a stress management strategy, including identifying and tracking your stress, and practicing a variety of relaxation exercises
http://www.prevention.va.gov/MPT/2013/ManageStressWorkbook_Dec2013.pdf
- **Helpful Web sites**
<http://veteranshealthlibrary.org> (search for: “Stress Management”)
<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov>
http://www.healthfinder.gov/scripts/SearchContext.asp?topic=825* (Spanish translations available here)
http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HandlingStress/*



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<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/stress-tips.aspx>*

<http://www.afterdeployment.org/>*

- **Problem-Solving Training/Overcoming Life's Challenges:**

<http://www.startmovingforward.org>

- **Pleasant Activities Tip Sheet**

http://www.prevention.va.gov/MPT/2013/PleasantActivitiesTipSheet_Dec2013.doc

- **Mindfulness-Based Stress Management**

Techniques—A basic introduction to mindfulness based stress management, including basic meditation skills is covered in the Manage Stress Workbook (see above) For more in-depth help, consider taking a class or consulting with an experienced behavioral health provider.

- **My HealthVet Resources for Stress and Your Well-Being**—MHV Stress and Well-Being Article

https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/anonymous.portal?_nfpb=true&_nfto=false&_pageLabel=spotlightArchive&contentPage=spotlight/October%202009/spotlight_stress09.html

- **Center for Integrated Healthcare Handouts: "Tools for Stress Management"** which include brief overviews of Abdominal Breathing, Cue Prompted Relaxation, Deep Breathing, General Relaxation Exercises, Meditation, and Visualization Guided Imagery

http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/coe/cih-visn2/clinical_resources.asp

- **On-Line Chat Service for Suicide Prevention**—The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Suicide Prevention campaign is expanding its outreach to all Veterans by piloting an online one-to-one chat service for those Veterans who prefer reaching out for assistance using the Internet. **Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and press option 1.**

<http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

ADDITIONAL RELAXATION TRAINING RESOURCES

- **Breathe2RelaxApp**—Learn deep breathing skills. Free of charge and available on the App Store
- **PTSD Coach App**—Free of charge and available on the App Store
- **Relaxation Recordings:**
 - *Introduction*—Kearney
 - *Long Breathing*—Burnett
 - *Short Breathing*—McManus
 - *Loving Kindness*—Kearney
 - *Body Scan*—McManus
- **VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Office of Patient Care Services**
<http://www.prevention.va.gov>
- **Veterans Crisis Line**
www.VeteransCrisisLine.net
- **VA Mental Health Services**
<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov>