

# Stress management

Stress is the body's natural response to change and is an unavoidable—and necessary—part of life. Stress may be triggered by emotions, day-to-day situations, or environmental factors, such as air pollution and climate.

Long-term (chronic) stress can have harmful effects on your mental and physical health, so it's important to manage your stress levels.



# Tips to manage your stress levels

## 1. Try meditation and other relaxation techniques

Practicing meditation, mindfulness, and deep breathing exercises can help minimize feelings of stress and anxiety. Meditation has also been shown to lower high blood pressure, reduce resting heart rate, and decrease the body's stress hormone, cortisol.

Not sure where to start? Set aside a few minutes each day to simply focus on your breathing without distractions, or try listening to a guided meditation online.

## 2. Get enough sleep

Poor sleep can have a significant effect on your mood and may contribute to higher stress levels. Adults should aim to get between seven and nine hours of sleep per night.

## 3. Unplug from your devices

Technology is entwined with our daily lives, but too much screen time can lead to increased stress and feelings of anxiety. Step away from your computer or phone at regular intervals throughout the day and before bed.

## 4. Connect with nature

Spending time outdoors can offer many health benefits, including improved mood and reduced stress levels. Can't escape into nature? Research suggests that simply looking at photos of nature can help improve your mood.

## 5. Plan ahead

Set time each week to plan out daily tasks and upcoming events. Keeping yourself organized can limit unnecessary stress. Find strategies that work best for you, whether that's using a mobile app or keeping a paper planner to efficiently manage your schedule.

## 6. Don't be afraid to say "no"

Busy, overwhelming schedules can be a trigger for stress. It's okay to turn down invitations or requests in favor of taking time for yourself.

## 7. Stay active

Participating in physical activity can improve your stress resilience. During exercise, the body releases "feel-good" chemicals such as endorphins, which can improve mood and reduce anxiety. Adults should participate in at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of moderate-intensity exercise each week to reap the many health benefits exercise offers.

## 8. Seek support

Staying connected with family, friends, and loved ones can improve your resilience to stress and help you cope with stress. Simply talking about your feelings can help reduce your stress levels. Seek help from a licensed mental health professional if you're struggling to cope with stress.



## Stress management apps

**Headspace: Mindful Meditation** ([App store](#), [Google Play](#))

**Happify** ([App store](#), [Google Play](#))

**Personal Zen** ([App store](#), [Google Play](#))

**Sanvello** ([App store](#), [Google Play](#))

## References

1. Anderson, E., & Shivakumar, G. (2013). Effects of exercise and physical activity on anxiety. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 4, 27.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). How Much Sleep Do I Need? [https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about\\_sleep/how\\_much\\_sleep.html](https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/how_much_sleep.html)
3. Childs, E., & de Wit, H. (2014). Regular exercise is associated with emotional resilience to acute stress in healthy adults. *Frontiers in physiology*, 5, 161.
4. Chiodini, I., Adda, G., Scillitani, A., Coletti, F., Morelli, V., Di Lembo, S., Epaminonda, P., Masserini, B., Beck-Peccoz, P., Orsi, E., Ambrosi, B., & Arosio, M. (2007). Cortisol secretion in patients with type 2 diabetes. *Diabetes Care*, 30(1), 83–88.
5. University of Rochester Medical Center. (n.d.) Content - Health Encyclopedia <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?ContentTypeID=1>
6. Dhabhar, F. S. (2009). Enhancing versus suppressive effects of stress on immune function: Implications for immunoprotection and immunopathology. *Neuroimmunomodulation*, 16(5), 300–317.
7. Franco, L. S., Shanahan, D. F., & Fuller, R. A. (2017). A review of the benefits of nature experiences: More than meets the eye. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14(8), 864.
8. Health Canada. (n.d.). Mental Health - Coping With Stress - Canada.ca. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/healthy-living/your-health/lifestyles/your-health-mental-health-coping-stress-health-canada-2008.html>
9. Jesús Gázquez Linares, Pérez-Fuentes, del Mar Molero Jurado, Fátima Oropesa Ruiz, del Mar Simón Márquez, & Saracostti. (2019). Sleep quality and the mediating role of stress management on eating by nursing personnel. *Nutrients*, 11(8), 1731.
10. Khouja, J. N., Munafò, M. R., Tilling, K., Wiles, N. J., Joinson, C., Etchells, P. J., John, A., Hayes, F. M., Gage, S. H., & Cornish, R. P. (2019). Is screen time associated with anxiety or depression in young people? Results from a UK birth cohort. *BMC Public Health*, 19(1).
11. Kilpeläinen, M., Koskenvuo, M., Helenius, H., & Terho, E. O. (2002). Stressful life events promote the manifestation of asthma and atopic diseases. *Clinical & Experimental Allergy*, 32(2), 256–263.

12. Münzel, T., & Daiber, A. (2018). Environmental stressors and their impact on health and disease with focus on oxidative stress. *Antioxidants & redox signaling*, 28(9), 735–740.
13. Novakova, B., Harris, P. R., Ponnusamy, A., & Reuber, M. (2013). The role of stress as a trigger for epileptic seizures: A narrative review of evidence from human and animal studies. *Epilepsia*, 54(11), 1866–1876.
14. Ozbay, F., Johnson, D. C., Dimoulas, E., Morgan, C. A., Charney, D., & Southwick, S. (2007). Social support and resilience to stress: from neurobiology to clinical practice. *Psychiatry (Edmont (Pa. : Township))*, 4(5), 35–40.
15. President's Council | health.gov. (n.d.). <https://health.gov/our-work/nutrition-physical-activity/presidents-council>
16. Sharma, H. (2015). Meditation: Process and effects. *AYU (an International Quarterly Journal of Research in Ayurveda)*, 36(3), 233.
17. Vogelzangs, N., Beekman, A. T. F., Milaneschi, Y., Bandinelli, S., Ferrucci, L., & Penninx, B. W. J. H. (2010). Urinary cortisol and six-year risk of all-cause and cardiovascular mortality. *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, 95(11), 4959–4964.
18. Yarıbeygi, H., Panahi, Y., Sahraei, H., Johnston, T. P., & Sahebkar, A. (2017). The impact of stress on body function: A review. *EXCLI journal*, 16, 1057–1072.



For more educational content and resources: [www.fullscript.com/learn](http://www.fullscript.com/learn)



This handout was developed and medically reviewed by Fullscript's Integrative Medical Advisory team.

\*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This information is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

Updated: November 2022