

Managing Stress



For Everyone

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⚠ GET HELP NOW

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, confidential, free, 24/7/365 help is available. Call or text 988 or text to 741741.

KEY POINTS

- Everyone experiences occasional stress; it is a normal part of life.
- Long-term stress can lead to worsening health problems.
- Managing stress daily can prevent you from developing long-term stress.
- Find resources if you are struggling to cope with stress for extra support.



How it impacts everyday life

Everyone experiences stress, which is your body's physical and emotional response to new or challenging situations. We face problems such as those related to work, school, health, and relationships. Feeling stress can be a normal coping mechanism as it helps us maintain a healthy sense of our ability to solve problems. However, when the stress is long term, known as chronic stress, it can lead to health problems. [\[2\]](#)

Stress can cause the following:

- Feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration
- Changes in appetite, energy, desires, and interests
- Trouble concentrating and making decisions
- Nightmares or problems sleeping
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, or skin rashes
- Worsening of chronic health problems and mental health conditions
- Increased use of [alcohol](#), [drugs](#), and other substances

Healthy ways to cope with stress

Learning to cope in a healthy way can help reduce your stress. Taking small steps in your daily life to manage stress can help you feel better. Everyone manages stress differently. You can find and manage what triggers your stress and the right combination of coping strategies may work for you.

Take care of your mind.

- Take breaks from news and social media. It is good to be informed, but constant information about negative events can increase stress.
- Make time to unwind.
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or [meditate](#).
 - Keep a journal.
 - Spend time outdoors either being active or relaxing.
 - Try to do some other relaxing activities you enjoy.
- Practice gratitude daily. Remind yourself of specific things you are grateful for and write them down. [\[4\]](#)
- Connect with others.
 - [Talk with people](#) you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
 - Connect with your community-based or faith-based organizations.

Gratitude works



Gratitude may be the best kept secret to feel better. [Practicing gratitude](#) every day physical and emotional well-being.

Take care of your body.

- Get enough sleep. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day to help you [sleep better](#). Adults need 7 or more hours of sleep each night.
- Move more. Staying [physically healthy](#) can improve your emotional well-being. Every little bit of physical activity helps.
 - Start small and build up to 2 ½ hours a week.
 - Break it into smaller amounts such as 20 to 30 minutes a day.
- Eat healthy. Have fruits and vegetables, lean protein, whole grains, and low-fat or no-fat dairy. Limit foods with unrefined sugars. [See Healthy Eating Tips.](#)
- Limit alcohol intake. Choose not to drink, or drink in moderation on days you drink alcohol. Moderation means:
 - 2 drinks or less a day for men.
 - 1 drink or less for women.
 - Find out more at [Drink Less, Be Your Best.](#)
- Avoid using illegal drugs or prescription drugs in ways other than prescribed. Don't take someone else's prescription drugs if they are available, and recovery starts with asking for help.
- Avoid smoking, vaping, and the use of other tobacco products. People can and do [quit smoking](#) for good.
- Continue with regular health appointments, tests, screenings, and vaccinations.

Integration of physical and mental health



Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health and can improve your mental health. Learn how to [get started](#).

Resources and support

Resources

- [CDC's Improve Your Emotional Well-Being](#)
- [CDC's Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event](#)
- [Tools for Supporting Emotional Wellbeing in Children and Youth](#) ↗
- [I'm So Stressed Out! Fact Sheet \(NIMH\)](#) ↗
- [Stress: MedlinePlus](#) ↗
- [Caring for Your Mental Health - National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\) \(nih.gov\)](#) ↗
- [Mindfulness Coach – PTSD: National Center for PTSD \(va.gov\)](#) ↗

SOURCES

CONTENT SOURCE:

[National Center for Injury Prevention and Control](#)

REFERENCES

1. National Institute of Mental Health. (n.d.). I'm so stressed out fact sheet. Retrieved on June 24, 2024 from