

# How to Cope with Stress



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DAILY STRESSORS CAN BE POSITIVE SOURCES OF MOTIVATION. But if you do not manage such stress, it can overwhelm you. Consider the following strategies for coping with stress:

- **Make a list of stressors.** Prioritize them and tackle them one at a time. Doing so will help to minimize feelings of being overwhelmed. Or, change aspects of a stressful situation that give you problems. For example, modify a carpool schedule to give you more time to get to work in the morning.
- **Expect surprises in your life** and plan and prepare in advance for problematic situations. For example, anticipate problems and develop a game plan for how to respond, including reminding yourself that the situation has occurred before and that you have survived it before.
- **Make lifestyle changes** that are conducive to healthy and less stressful living. Exercise regularly, drink plenty of water, maintain a well-balanced diet and eat regular meals, try to balance work and personal life, schedule time for personal recreation, stay involved with family and friends, and limit social contact with people who are chronically negative.
- **Relax your body**, using methods like deep breathing, stretching, meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, self-talk and self-massage.
- **Take the time to talk** with a friend, mate or child. Express feelings you might have been holding back. Listen for advice.
- **Express your emotions.** Laugh. Go to a comedy club, see a funny movie or spend time with a funny friend. Cry. Crying is a good way of physically releasing pent up frustrations and anxieties caused by stress.
- **Do something you love**, such as gardening, reading a good book or seeing friends.
- **Avoid excessive alcohol**, caffeine and tobacco, all of which boost the stress response.

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