

# Stress Busting Management Tips

## What Can I Do *RIGHT NOW* to Feel Better???

- **Breathe:** Stress can lead to shallow, quick breathing. Take a few slow, deep breaths.
- **Stretch:** Stretching releases tension, and you can do it almost anywhere. Stretch slowly and gently—you should not feel pain.
- **Get moving:** Even 10 minutes of walking or jumping jacks can help.
- **Try aromatherapy:** Drip a calming essential oil like lavender, lemon balm, chamomile or geranium in a warm bath or on your wrist to help you de-stress.
- **Laugh:** Laughter can reduce stress, so see a funny movie or call a friend who cracks you up.
- **Express yourself:** Sometimes telling a friend or family member what's on your mind or writing in a journal can make you feel better.
- **Be "in the moment":** Pay attention to what's going on around you using all your senses: Instead of rushing around in a fog, notice a beautiful tree, smell a flower, feel the warm sun.

## How Can I Make Myself Healthier and Less Stressed Overall?

- **Get enough sleep:** Regular sleep (7–8 hrs/night for most adults) reduces stress, increases productivity, reduces irritability and boosts concentration and focus.
- **Eat and drink well:** Healthy meals and drinking enough water daily are important in sustaining energy and maintaining health. Avoid or cut down on junk food and sugar.
- **Exercise:** Aerobic exercise helps reduce stress hormones and boost endorphins. Practices like yoga can be real stress-busters because yoga stretches your tense muscles, helps you breathe deeply, makes you more aware and gets your blood flowing. Exercise on a regular basis.
- **Relate:** Building stable relationships helps reduce stress by providing a network for fun and support. If you're having trouble making friends, try volunteering; joining a club or spiritual community; taking a "for-fun" class; reaching out to old friends and family; or talking to a counselor, therapist or mentor.
- **Avoid or reduce caffeine:** Cut down on the coffee, soda and energy drinks. If you need a little caffeine, try black or green tea, which may have certain health benefits.
- **Avoid or reduce alcohol and drug use:** Alcohol and drugs may seem like a "quick fix" for stress, but in the long run, they can increase stress by impairing health and mood, interfering with work and relationships and preventing you from learning healthy coping skills.
- **"Reframe" your thoughts:** Pay attention to your thoughts—are they generally negative? With awareness and practice, you can develop balance between "good" and "bad," accepting things you don't like, envisioning positive change and reminding yourself that all emotions, "good" and "bad," are temporary. Regularly appreciating what's good boosts your mood.
- **Play:** "All work and no play ..." Well, you know the saying. Having time to enjoy yourself, pursue a favorite hobby, laugh and feel alive is just as important as school and work.
- **Meditate:** Meditation allows you to relax your mind and body. There are many different kinds of meditation, so experiment with a type that works for you and do it regularly.
- **Get organized:** Managing your time and planning ahead help minimize crises. Taking responsibility for solving problems or asking for help when needed can reduce worry.
- **Learn to say "no":** Set limits to avoid burnout—you can't do it all. Learn to be assertive in recognizing and prioritizing your needs. Say "I need to think about that" to give yourself time to see if a task is do-able if you're tempted to say "yes" right away.
- **Be realistic:** Setting your expectations too high (or too low) can cause you distress.
- **Give yourself a break:** Take breaks in your work to rejuvenate yourself—even a few minutes helps!
- **Be kind to yourself:** Don't beat yourself up when you don't "get it all right." No one can do everything perfectly all the time, and the right balance is different for everyone.