



Mental Health Association of Northern Kentucky

Leaders in Promoting Mental Wellness

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Stress Management

What is Stress? Stress is *pressure* from the outside that can make us feel *tense* on the inside. Stress is an *unavoidable* fact of life. Some stress is a part of daily life -- affects everyone. Certain kinds are actually helpful -- they keep you on your toes. But, too much stress on your mind and body can make you miserable -- worried, sad, and ill. Stress and how you handle it affects your health and happiness. If you allow it to build up, stress can sometimes produce tensions serious enough to *interfere* with your normal daily activities. One of the main causes of stress is change, especially sudden or disagreeable change. Excess tension can result in anxiety and depression. Almost all these mood disorders can be helped. Knowing about stress is a big first step. Listed below are **20 Proven Stress Reducers**:

1. Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning. The inevitable morning mishaps will be less stressful.
2. Don't rely on your memory. Write down appointment times, when to pick up the laundry, when library books are due, etc.
3. Procrastination is stressful. Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do today; whatever you want to do today, do it now.
4. Plan ahead. Don't let the gas tank get below one-quarter full, keep a well-stocked "emergency shelf" of home staples, don't wait until you're down to the last bus token or postage stamp to buy more, etc.
5. Don't put up with something that doesn't work. If your alarm clock, wallet, shoe laces, windshield wipers -- whatever -- are a constant aggravation, get them fixed or get new ones.
6. Be prepared to wait. A paperback can make a wait in a post office line almost pleasant. Time waiting is also a good opportunity to plan what you need to do during the rest of your day or week.
7. Powerful positive thinking -- for every one thing that goes wrong, there are probably 10, 50, or 100 blessings, count them!
8. Turn needs into preferences. Our basic physical needs translate into food and water and keeping warm. Everything else is a preference. Don't get attached to preferences.
9. Make friends with non-worriers. Nothing can get you into the habit of worrying faster than associating with chronic worrywarts.
10. Simplify, simplify, simplify! If you can get all your groceries at one store or if you can finish all your errands in one trip, do it! However, if it is overwhelming for you, do a little at a time.
11. Create order out of chaos. Organize your home and workspace so that you always know exactly where things are. Put things away where they belong and you won't have to go through the stress of losing things.

12. Add an ounce of love to everything you do.
13. Become more flexible. Some things are worth not doing perfectly and learn to compromise more.
14. Eliminate destructive self-talk: "I'm too old to...", "I'm too fat to..."
15. "Worry about the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves." That's another way of saying: "Take care of today as best you can and the yesterdays and tomorrows will take care of themselves."
16. Do one thing at a time. When you are with someone, be with that person and with no one or nothing else. When you are busy with a project, concentrate on doing that project and forget about everything else you have to do.
17. If a particularly unpleasant task faces you, do it early in the day and get it over with. Then the rest of the day will be free of anxiety and dread.
18. Learn to delegate responsibility to capable others.
19. Forget about counting to 10. Count to 1000 before doing or saying something that might make matters worse.
20. Have a forgiving view of people and events. Accept the fact that we live in a stressful world.

Ways To Cope with Stress

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| Physical Exercise | To work off tension, release aggressive feelings, and control weight |
| Breathing Exercises | To slow down bodily functions and increase oxygen flow |
| Relaxation Exercises | To control mind and body – to feel one's own body relax |
| Yoga | To be in control of mind, body, and spirit through relaxation exercise and deep breathing techniques |
| Rhythmic Activity | Dance to rhythmic music. Play, sing, or listen to music. |
| Imagery | Focus on a pleasant spot for 10 – 15 minutes |
| Talk out a Problem | Don't be afraid to share, laugh, or cry with someone you Trust |
| Express Yourself Non-Verbally | Drawing, poetry, and crafts may help you to express your feelings and relieve tension |
| Select Activities And Projects | that you LIKE to do, rather than things you think are good for you. Pleasant recreation creates a health "whole new world." |
| Maintain Proper Diet | Be aware of your eating habits while under stress. Avoid junk food and excessive stimulants. Foods can and do affect your mood. |