



# How to Reduce Stress in Your Life

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Stress is your body's response to change. It's your body's way of letting you know that there's too much going on in your life. While a moderate level of stress can make you feel alive and productive, excess stress can lead to serious health problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, weight gain or loss, sleep disorders, relationship problems, and more.

The first step in managing the stress in your life is identifying the cause. Once you know what is causing the stress, you will be able to create a solution to relieve it. Try the following to reduce the stress in your life:

**Exercise.** Find an exercise you enjoy and do it regularly. The activity will help you release tension and feel better. Consider taking a walk on your coffee break or at lunch time.

**Eat Healthy.** A balanced diet will help you manage stress in healthy ways. Limit your caffeine intake and alcohol consumption. Don't smoke.

**Laugh.** A sense of humor can give you a new perspective on a problem. It's one of the best medicines for managing stress.

**Make Time For Yourself.** Listen to music, read a book, go shopping or do something that makes you feel good.

**Slow Down Before Bed.** Make it a point to relax before bedtime so you can unwind from a busy day unrushed.

**Maintain Regular Sleeping Habits.** Go to bed on time and get up on time so you can start the day unrushed.

**Delegate Tasks.** Let other people help you. Remember, "your way" is not "the only way" to get something done.

**Recognize Your Limitations.** Learn to say "no" to things that won't fit into your schedule without compromising your health.

**Breathe Deeply.** When you're under stress, your muscles tense causing your breathing to become shallow and rapid. Taking slow, deep breaths is one of the best ways to reduce stress: breathe in slowly through your nose and slowly ex-

**Take One Day At A Time.** Try to live in the present and keep your mind from wandering around in the past or future.

**Make New Friends.** Spend time with people who do not work in the same organization or field.

**Organize Your Life.** Eliminate surprises by getting organized: plan ahead; write things down; put things back where they belong; allow extra time between meetings; etc.

**Don't Create Your Own Stress.** If you can't change a situation, change the way you think about it and change your reaction to it. For example, try to look at "problems" as "opportunities" or "challenges".

**Give People a Break.** Other People have bad days too. Being patient and tolerant with others is not only the kind thing to do, it also helps you avoid unnecessary stress.

**Give Yourself a Break.** Go on a mini vacation. The change of scenery and break in your routine will help you reduce stress and remind you of what's really important in your

## Warning Signs of Stress:

- Indigestion
- Depression or frequent crying
- Overeating or under eating
- Anger, frustration, irritability
- Feeling tired or lethargic
- Heart palpitations
- Sleeping too much or not enough
- Dry mouth
- Headache
- Skin problems
- Confusion
- Menstrual irregularities
- Fatigue
- Muscle tension