

Managing **Stress** effectively

A fundamental **skill** for **healthy living**

We all face stress in our daily lives, and managing stress effectively is fundamental to healthy living. When unchecked, excess stress can affect blood pressure, weight, emotional wellbeing, and sleep, and increase ones risk for heart disease. Therefore, it is important to learn and practice effective coping strategies to improve our awareness and response to stress.

Below are some tips and techniques to help you better manage your stress.

- **Exercise** regularly.
- **Limit** alcohol and caffeine, and don't smoke.
- **Learn to** accept things you can't change, and avoid things that upset you, such as driving in rush-hour traffic.
- **Keep your schedule manageable:** Give yourself time to get organized, and learn to say "no."
- **Change how you respond** to difficult situations by trying to be positive instead of negative.
- **Learn to relax.** Try different relaxation techniques that take just a minute or two:
 - **Deep breathing:** Exhale slowly, relax your muscles, and feel the tension flow out of your body.
 - **Progressive relaxation:** Tense every muscle in your body starting with your toes, hold for 10 seconds, and gradually release the tension.
 - **Shoulder shrugs:** Raise your shoulders up to your ears, hold for 4 seconds, release, and slowly rotate your head in a circular manner.
 - **Focused breathing:** Imagine that the air you are inhaling is coming to you as a cloud that floats away as you exhale; repeat very slowly and relax.
 - **Time out:** Pick something enjoyable where you are and focus on it for 10 seconds, admiring what you like about it, and breathing deeply.



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