

Tips and Techniques to Reduce Stress

- Taking deep breaths accompanied by thoughts of being in control ("I can handle this")
- Progressive muscle relaxation, (repeatedly tensing and relaxing large muscles of the body)
- Setting small goals and breaking tasks into smaller more manageable chunks
- Exercising and eating regular meals, and avoiding excessive caffeine
- Focusing on things you can control and letting go of things you cannot control
- Rehearsing and practicing feared situations (e.g., practicing public speaking or asking someone out on a date)
- Talking about problems with others, including parents/guardians, older adults and friends
- Lowering unrealistic expectations
- Getting enough sleep
- Accepting yourself as you are and identifying unique strengths and building on them, but realizing no one is perfect!
- Develop assertiveness training skills. For example, state feelings in polite, firm and not overly aggressive or passive ways: ("I feel angry when you yell at me" "Please stop yelling.")
- Decrease negative self talk: challenge negative thoughts about yourself with alternative neutral or positive thoughts.
- Learn to feel good about doing a competent or "good enough" job, rather than demanding perfection from yourself and others
- Take a break from stressful situations. Activities like listening to music, talking to a friend, drawing, writing, or spending time with a pet can reduce stress
- Build a network of friends who help you cope in a positive way

Stressed Out?



**Health and Wellness
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Stress

What is Stress?

Stress is your body's way of responding to any kind of demand. It can be caused by both good and bad experiences.

When people feel stressed by something going on around them, their bodies react by releasing chemicals into the blood. These chemicals give people more energy and strength, which can be a good thing if their stress is caused by physical danger. But this can also be a bad thing, if their stress is in response to something emotional and there is no outlet for this extra energy and strength.

What causes Stress?

Many different things can cause stress.

Common causes of Teenage Stress

- academic pressure and career decisions
- mid-year exams and tests
- pressure to wear certain types of clothing or hairstyles
- pressure to try drugs, alcohol or sex
- pressure to fit in with peer groups and measure up to others
- adaptation to bodily changes
- family and peer conflicts
- taking on too many activities at one time

Identifying what may be causing you stress is often the first step in learning how to better deal with your stress.

Some of the most common sources of stress are:

Survival Stress - You may have heard the phrase "fight or flight" before. This is a common response to danger in all people and animals. When you are afraid that someone or something may physically hurt you, your body naturally responds with a burst of energy so that you will be better able to survive the dangerous situation (fight) or escape it all together (flight). This is survival stress.

Internal Stress - Have you ever caught yourself worrying about things you can do nothing about or worrying for no reason at all? This is internal stress and it is one of the most important kinds of stress to understand and manage. Internal stress is when people make themselves stressed. This often happens when we worry about things we can't control or put ourselves in situations we know will cause us stress.

Environmental Stress - This is a response to things around you that cause stress, such as noise, crowding, and pressure from work or family. Identifying these environmental stresses and learning to avoid them or deal with them will help lower your stress level.

Fatigue and Overwork - This kind of stress builds up over a long time and can take a hard toll on your body. It can be caused by working too much or too hard at your job(s), school, or home. It can also be caused by not knowing how to manage your time well or how to take time out for rest and relaxation. This can be one of the hardest kinds of stress to avoid because many people feel this is out of their control.

<http://www.mtstcil.org/skills/stress-deal-1.html>