

with the anxiety?

Some stress cannot be changed so you need to learn to deal with the effect it has on you and your body. The anxiety caused by stress can sometimes make us react before we take the time to think about what we are doing. You may find some of the following techniques helpful in dealing with your stress-related anxiety.

Deep breathing - Deep breathing will help you relax and reduce your anxiety as it slows your body back down to its normal state.

Stretch and relax your muscles - Take a few minutes to concentrate on your tight muscles. Progressively stretching and relaxing your muscles will not only help your tense body but will also take your mind off your stressful situation long enough for you to calm down and put it into perspective.

Take a break - If possible take a short walk, get a drink of water or get some air. This will help you regain control of your situation and cope much better.



Count to 10 - We all know this method for dealing with children, but it can be used for dealing with stress as well. It will give you a few seconds to regain control and manage your emotions.

Music - Relaxing music can often reduce stress. Be aware that everyone has their own idea of relaxing music so if you play music, try not to stress others or perhaps wear headphones.

Attitude - Having a positive attitude can greatly reduce your stress. Dwelling on the negatives of a situation will make that situation even more stressful. You are the only person who can control how you perceive various situations and events in your life. Changing your perception from negative to positive can improve your stress levels and also improve your daily life.

These methods can help reduce anxiety by lowering your blood pressure, slowing down your heart rate and reducing muscle tension. Mastering these, in combination with practicing the stress management techniques, will greatly reduce the effect of stress on your health and your life.

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Managing Stress



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What is stress?

Stress is a reaction of our body to changing situations. A state of tension is created when we respond to situations or pressures that we have no control over. Originally, stress manifested itself in our bodies as a response to physical danger. All the body's organs would prepare themselves to either fight or escape the perceived danger. Today, however, we rarely experience physical danger, but we do experience situations that we feel are out of our control, and we do experience these situations more often than ever before. Contemporary stress has become a problem because it is long term rather than only occasional and produces more wear and tear on our bodies as we try to cope. However, stress is a part of life and not all stress is bad. Some stress can encourage productivity and creativity in people, which is good. Everyone has their own optimum level of stress. The key is to identify your own best stress level then develop strategies to stay within that optimum level.

Why is stress harmful?

Evolution has equipped our bodies with defense mechanisms for occasional confrontations. These mechanisms result in rapid breathing and heart beat, increased blood pressure and blood sugar, increased blood flow to the large muscles of the arms and legs and increased blood flow to the brain. Instead of occurring only once in a while, these reactions have become common and repetitive. This creates a strain on the many organs of the body and can result in hypertension, stroke, heart attack, diabetes, ulcers, neck and lower back pain, and many other modern symptoms and diseases. In addition, stress stemming from loneliness, bereavement, depression and frustration is related to a reduction of the immune system's ability to fight off things like colds, AIDS and even cancer. Stress is also a contributing factor to depression, and anxiety. Most healthcare professionals will agree that stress has a major effect on our overall health and well-being.

What are the major causes of stress?

Today's stress comes from our modern lifestyle that includes pressures from our jobs, our family, our finances and sometimes from ourselves. It is important to realize that everyone is different and will react differently to various situations. What causes stress for one person can be challenging for another. In order to manage your stress, you must first identify what is causing your own personal stress.

What are the symptoms of stress?

Stress is cumulative, which means it adds up over time. When it reaches a certain point, various symptoms can appear. Symptoms of stress can be both physical or emotional and can include the following:

- headaches
- low back pain
- fatigue
- upset stomach
- high blood pressure
- depression
- anxiety
- muscle tension
- insomnia
- loss of appetite
- cankers and cold sores
- reduced sex drive
- irritability
- anger

How can I manage my stress?

Learning to cope with and manage stress will help reduce the effect of stress in your life. Below you will find several techniques that can assist you in dealing with your personal stress.

Identify what is causing your stress - You need to take the time to review what is really causing your stress. Does your stress come from your actual job or does it come from the expectations that you put on yourself? If it is from your job, you may need to concentrate on managing the anxiety caused by the stressful situation. If it is from pressure you placed on yourself, you may need to re-evaluate your expectations and consider making them more realistic.

Recognize your signs of stress - Whether it is a sudden feeling of anxiety or anger, extreme fatigue or feeling run down, everyone has their own personal signs of stress. Once you recognize these signs, you will probably also recognize a pattern. Recognizing the signs and the situations that produce these signs will allow you to develop a strategy to manage such situations in the future.

Eat healthy - Stressed people have a tendency to eat poorly. A healthy balance is important whether you are stressed or not. It will help your body to help you manage stressful situations.

Exercise - This is one of the best ways to deal with stress. It will keep your body in shape and leave you in a very relaxed state.

Take time out - Everyone needs a little personal time. It can be taking a relaxing bath, or reading book. Realize that you can't do everything and sometimes you need to say no.

Have fun - Another excellent way to deal with stress is to laugh. Laughter releases chemical endorphins into your body that reduce pain and help muscles relax. In addition it reduces blood pressure and lowers the heart rate.

Ask for help - Sometimes you just can't cope with stress alone. Help can be many things: physical help to deal with a daunting task, a person to talk to so you don't keep your anxieties bottled up inside, or even your doctor. If you feel that your stress is controlling your life, asking for help may be the most important thing you do to manage your stress.

How do I cope



Learning to cope with and manage stress will help reduce the effect of stress in your life.