

Nine Tips for Dealing Constructively With Stress

Experiencing stress for many of us can be traumatic. Often, self-doubt will creep in and we find ourselves second-guessing all of our decisions or feeling hopeless and constrained by our circumstances. When feeling over-burdened with strain and anxiety can lead to depression or lowered self-esteem. The following are tips to cope effectively with stress.

- **Visualize Yourself as Your Own Hero.** What positive effects do you have on those around you? How can you step up to make an immediate impact on your situation or those of others? How can you mobilize those hanging back? How do you restore meaning to your life?
- **Stay Connected with Social Networks.** At home, at work, at community groups, church, synagogue or mosque - connect with the people you know and trust. Open yourself up to others in real ways and allow others to discover your real self.
- **Listen to Each Other.** People will not trust you to act in their best interests until you genuinely understand their needs. Practice good listening skills. Create opportunities for you and others to talk about concerns.
- **Take Care of Yourself Physically.** Walking, even 20 minutes a day will release endorphins, which are the body's way of producing pleasure producing substances that are inside of every one of us. Get enough sleep at night.
- **Eat Nutritious Foods.** Take care of your body and your body will take care of you. Eat a healthy diet of whole grains, vegetables and fruits and protein. Focus on finding foods you love and easy recipes that incorporate a few fresh ingredients.
- **Avoid Stimulants.** Pass on the double-lattes and excessive use of alcohol. Sleeping pills may be helpful for a few days, but over-reliance may create additional problems.
- **Breathe Deeply.** Morning and night, take at least 10 breaths in and out. Breathe in, hold your breath for 10 seconds, and then breathe out. Just breathing will relax you and help you face stress more positively.



- **Give Yourself Permission to Think Positively.** Play with your dog, your kids, your spouse, or your friend. Give yourself permission to see a movie, read, take a walk in the woods, and play golf. Anything thing that helps you feel better about you.
- **Stay Away From Playing the Victim.** Many of us play the role of helpless bystander and blame others for our situation. If it weren't for "those people" Take responsibility for your own actions and resist a self-serving spin.

Some people are naturally more resilient than others; however everyone can work on what causes constant worry. You may want to list the situations that cause you anxiety and look for patterns. Do certain people or groups cause you repeated stress? Are you more stressed by internal or external issues? Do you show stress in situations where you though you appeared calm? Finding your triggers for nervous tension may help you determine underlying causes and put you in a better place to deal with strain when it happens.