



STRESS BUSTING STRATEGIES

This resource includes a detailed list of strategies you can employ to help you manage your stress levels. When viewed electronically, this handout also includes hyperlinks to additional resources that can support your mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

- ✓ **Journal about your stress and worry.** This helps you identify the regular stressors in your life and the way you deal with them. Each time you feel stressed keep track of it in your journal. Make sure to track what caused the stress, how you felt physically and emotionally, how you responded, and what you did to make yourself feel better.
- ✓ **Limit worry to a specific time of day.** Do your most unpleasant or most difficult task at the beginning of the day when you are fresh, thereby avoiding the stress of last minute preparation. Procrastination feeds stress!
- ✓ **Postpone worry when you are busy.** Schedule your day, if possible, so that stressful scenarios don't overlap, reducing the number of stressors you must juggle at any one time. Stagger deadlines for large projects. Visit <http://www.wikihow.com/Schedule-Your-Day> for pointers on scheduling your time.
- ✓ **Tolerate and understand uncertainty.** When deadlines approach and calamities at home arise, remember to take a *time out* and a moment to address the situation. See if there really is something you can change or control in the situation.
- ✓ **Focus on the present, all else is illusion.** Admitting to yourself that there's nothing you can do about a particular issue will go a long way in helping you adjust.
- ✓ **Do a physical activity.** When you exercise, your body releases endorphins that creates a natural high. Exercise helps regulate sleep, decrease tension, decrease depression, and increase your immune system – from yoga to simple stretches during the day and at night.
- ✓ **Talk to a friend.** Sometimes all you need is to alleviate some tension. Having a conversation can add different perspectives, allow you to vent frustration, and give you a feeling of community instead of isolation. Remember you are not alone and many others face similar hardships.
- ✓ **Slow down your breathing.** Taking a moment to slow your breathing down can clear your mind and decrease your stress reactions.
- ✓ **Relax your body.** Begin in a comfortable position, either lying down or with your feet flat on the ground. Slowly tense the different parts of your body, starting with your toes, and then slowly relax them. Repeat this process of tensing and relaxing three times.



- ✓ **Adopt a healthy lifestyle.** Well-nourished bodies are better prepared to cope with stress, so be mindful of what you eat and remember to stay hydrated. Visit http://www.helpguide.org/life/healthy_eating_diet.htm for a healthy eating guide. In addition, adequate sleep fuels your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired will increase your stress and may cause you to think irrationally. Visit http://www.helpguide.org/life/sleep_tips.htm for sleeping tips.