

Managing Stress



What is Stress?

Stress is a normal physical response to events that make you feel threatened or upset your emotional balance in some way. When you perceive a threat, your nervous system responds by releasing a flood of stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones rouse the body for emergency action.

Adjust, Avoid, Accept

- Change the way you view it, or **adjust** your approach.
- Steer well clear, or **avoid** the situation that causes you stress
- Just live with it, or **accept** the situation.

Stretch Away Stress

NECK ROLL

Let your chin hang down to your chest. Next, slowly roll your head to your left side, so that your left ear is near your left shoulder. Roll your head backwards and let your head hang as far back as is comfortable. Now, slowly roll your head to the right, so that your right ear is near your right shoulder. Continue rolling your head until your chin is once again hanging to your chest. Now, repeat the process, but go in the other direction (so that you begin by rolling your head to your right shoulder.)

LUMBAR STRETCH

Stand and place both hands in the small of your back. Arch your back slowly, feeling it stretch. Repeat three to six times.

SIDE STRETCH

Stand with your left hand on your left hip. Place your right hand straight out so that it is perpendicular to your body. Slowly stretch your right hand over your head, to the left, and bend to the left at the waist as far as is comfortable. Stay stretched for a moment, and then slowly return to the standing position. Repeat for the opposite side.

SHOULDER SHRUG

Relax your shoulders. Slowly shrug towards the front of our body and upwards. Next, shrug your shoulders down towards the back of your body. When your shoulders are back in their natural position, relax, and then repeat the exercise in the opposite direction.

It's all about you

Life is full of stressful situations and they are not resigned to the workplace, in fact the most stressful situations are always at a personal level. We all have a limit of how much stress we can cope with, a useful way to picture this is a glass being slowly filled with water. The glass represents your stress capacity and the water stressful situations.



A Good Night's Sleep

- Only 43% of adults have a good night's sleep almost every night.
- The average person needs 7 hours and 18 minutes for a good night's sleep, but receives only 6 hours and 40 minutes. That doesn't sound like a big difference, but over the course of the year that's about 230 hours of sleep debt!
- 28% of adults feel tired due to lack of sleep which interferes with their daily activities at least a few days a month. 5% reported that it does so almost every day.
- About a quarter of adults have driven while drowsy.

Eating Properly

Sticking to a healthy diet is a key part of managing stress. It gives your body the proper fuel it needs; giving you the energy you need to battle the harmful effects of stress. Remember, garbage in, garbage out!

Exercising

Finding time to take care of our bodies is another challenge many of us face. Exercise is an important part of stress reduction for many reasons, including:

- Exercise increases your strength increasing your resilience to stress.
- Exercise can clear your mind, reducing the harmful effects of stress.
- Exercise can help you work out the negative emotions that can result from stress, such as anger and frustration.
- Exercise can also give you time alone to think through stressful situations.