

## Instant stress relievers

Everyday activities can produce plenty of stress. Today's little hassles can pile up until there is a mountain of stress.

### **When pressure adds up, take a quick break.**

When pressure adds up and you can't concentrate anymore, try an instant stress reliever. A quick break from a stressful situation will help you return refreshed

- **Take deep breaths.** Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Put your hand on your abdomen and feel it expand as you fill your lungs and breathe deeply.
- **Take a vacation.** Whether for a few days or a few moments, imagine a pleasant scene using all five senses. In a couple of minutes you'll capture the pleasure of being there.
- **Get a fresh outlook.** Taking yourself, your job or other things too seriously leads to stress. Set aside competition and lighten the load. Begin by taking a step back from the situation.
- **Find a friend.** People who are non-judgmental, supportive and who listen are good friends to have.
- **Laugh often.** Take some time each day to have fun and laugh. Read a joke book, chat with a friend or co-worker who has a good sense of humor. This adds up to renewed energy and concentration.
- **Change your environment.** Walk to the window and observe the outdoors. Take a walk at lunch. Exercise burns off stress. When you have too many priorities playing tug-of-war for your attention, physically get up and move. It will help your frame of mind.
- **Set some goals.** Too many things on your to-do list? Boggled down by a complex project? Select a task which you can quickly and easily complete and do it. It gives a good sense of accomplishment
- **Take time to refocus.** For 10 minutes, set your concerns aside and concentrate on another area of your life. Make weekend plans, think of friends or imagine a surprise for someone. As you refocus from work to these other thoughts, stress often begins to fade.

### **Limited stress beneficial**

We can never escape stress altogether. In fact, some limited stress is beneficial. For instance, stress prompts us to make useful changes in our lives. It signals us to find a new job or end a bad relationship or become stronger in hard times.

However, prolonged stress without relief creates real physical and emotional problems. For example, headaches, stomachaches, and other ailments can be caused by stress, which can make some people avoid certain situations rather than learn to cope with stress.

As you begin to understand how stress affects you as an individual, you will develop your own ideas to relieve stress at home and work.

### **For more help**

If you've tried to reduce your stress level but aren't making progress, talk over your situation with a trusted friend, family member or member of the clergy. Or if you would like to discuss your situation and feelings with a professional, call a counselor. For help in an emergency, call Crisis Services at (810) 257-3740 or toll free at (877) 346-3648, where a counselor is available 24 hours a day. TTY users call (810) 232-6310.

Other Genesee Health System handouts include: *The art of stress reduction*, *Codependency*, *Easy listening*, *Beat the holiday blues*, *8 to 5 stress in the workplace*, *10 stress busters for families*, *Working moms – 9 to 5 and beyond* and *S.O.S. Signs of stress*. ©

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