

KEY TECHNIQUES FOR STRESS REDUCTION

212-Careers



Physical stress might feel good after a workout. People know exercise boosts mental and physical health, so a little stress in the joints and muscles doesn't worry them. If someone's body bothers them without cause, they have good reason to stress out.

Stress can also be mentally based. You've got those end-of-month bills and many other things on your mind. Like its physical counterpart, this type of stress triggers reactions in the body that crank up your senses. This is a normal response to your body's perceived threat or danger. When stress is chronic, as it is with so many of us, serious mental and physical health problems can develop.

Here are four best practices for reducing stress that you can sprinkle into your daily routine. They can be used to prevent stress from appearing and to reduce its effects if it does.

The 4 As of Stress

Avoid

Identify what triggers your stress. Then, do something else. This may sound simple, but you must eliminate stress regularly. Keep a stress journal and identify patterns of experiences that lead to stress, then avoid them if you can.

Alter

If you can't avoid a situation that might get you stressed out, handle it differently than you have in the past. For instance, you may be forced to deal with someone who makes you anxious. If that's the case, consider your past dealings with that individual. What can you do differently to keep a stress response from being triggered?

It may be difficult to avoid eating your emotions. When stress strikes, you may reach for unhealthy comfort food. Emotional eating can lead to serious health problems, so you should address it. The first step is to alter the foods you eat to alleviate stress.

Nuts and seeds are healthy stress relievers (as long as they aren't coated in a sugary glaze). Lean turkey delivers the stress-busting chemical tryptophan. An egg, avocado, or cup of yogurt without added sugar can help you manage stress when it strikes without turning to healthier alternatives.

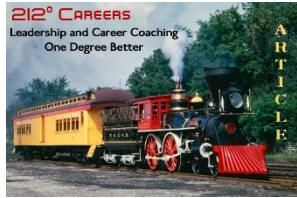
Accept

Acceptance means learning from mistakes. Forgive others even when it's difficult. Embrace positive self-talk when stress is unavoidable and you can't alter the experience. Accept that this is happening and live in the present moment. Know that this, too, shall pass.

Adapt

Humans are incredibly adaptive. Our ability to adapt to any situation is one of the reasons we sit atop the food chain. You can adapt to stress by changing your expectations. Stop shooting for perfection because that is a stress-promoting belief that is impossible to attain.

Adapt your thinking behaviors. When negative thoughts pop up, they will choose a positive belief instead. Reframe stressful situations, viewing them as opportunities rather than producers of anxiety. Adapt how you look at the big picture when stress hits, and you can get a handle on it.



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