



Effective Stress Relief Tips

Stress is inevitable, but it doesn't have to be unhealthy. Tame your stress with these simple, small changes.

The Effects of Stress On Your Health

Stress is a normal reaction to everyday challenges, but when stress becomes chronic, it can affect your physical, mental, and emotional health. You may experience exhaustion, aches and pains, and become sick more frequently. Over time, stress can increase your risk for high blood pressure, heart attack, and stroke. Stress can also lead to anxiety and depression and unhealthy behaviors like overeating and drinking too much alcohol. Fortunately, there are a wealth of easy, healthy ways to combat the negative effects of stress.



Boost your nutrition

- Limit highly-processed foods, added sugars, caffeine including coffee, soda, and energy drinks, and alcohol
- Focus on real, whole foods such as fruits and veggies, beans and legumes, nuts and seeds, and whole grains
- Drink enough water: 104 ounces for men; 72 ounces for women each day
- Sip on herbal tea such as black, green, chamomile, or mint
- Talk with your doctor about stress-relief supplements such as Ashwagandha, L-Theanine, B vitamins, valerian, and magnesium



Prioritize sleep quantity and quality

- Get at least 7 hours of sleep every night
 - Go to bed at the same time every night and wake up at the same time every morning, even on weekends
 - Stop watching TV and using your computer/ phone at least 30 minutes before bedtime. Make your bedroom a screen-free zone
 - Find ways to wind down before bed such as turning off the news and doing something relaxing like reading, taking a bath, or taking a few minutes to meditate
- Keep your bedroom dark (use blackout shades/curtains) and cool—between 60-67 degrees
 - Get a white noise machine or use earplugs to block out snoring from a partner or minimize the sounds of traffic

Move more

- Get 150 minutes of exercise every week. Make it doable by breaking it down into smaller sessions throughout the day.
- Focus on cardio and muscle-strengthening activities
- Take a yoga class or do a few yoga poses
- Prioritize exercise that you enjoy, makes you feel good, and that you can stick with

Learn coping skills

- Identify your stress triggers such as tight work deadlines and try to develop strategies to prevent or better manage them
- Write in a journal: track your stressors, feelings, thoughts, and reactions to identify patterns. Or, keep a daily gratitude journal
- Get organized by making daily and weekly lists
- Break up larger projects into smaller, more manageable tasks
- Use productivity and time management tools like a Pomodoro technique timer app
- Watch a comedy film, video of your favorite stand-up comedian, or do [Laughter Yoga](#).
- Find a therapist who uses cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or utilize your employer-sponsored EAP or wellness platform



Make positive changes

- Avoid eating at your computer and have a no-phone rule at mealtimes
- Set boundaries, such as avoiding checking email at night and saying 'no' to more commitments
- Ask for a flexible, hybrid, or work-from-home schedule
- Communicate with your supervisor about setting realistic expectations
- Block out your work calendar to devote time to a large project
- Outsource to-dos like house cleaning, grocery delivery, or a laundry service
- Ask for help from your partner or hire a caregiver to help with children

- Change your self-talk to be more positive
- Accept that *done* is better than *perfect*
- Create a budget and stop overspending
- Purge your closets, the garage, and items you no longer use, and then sell or donate

Take time to relax

- Step away from your computer and take small breaks from work throughout the day
- Develop a meditation practice using the RethinkCare app
- Do deep breathing exercises such as box breathing
- Explore visualization, guided imagery, or progressive muscle relaxation
- Listen to calm or uplifting music
- Diffuse essential oils such as lavender, lemongrass, Ylang-ylang, and chamomile
- Try acupuncture or massage
- Carve out time for rest. Spend time in nature, get out for a walk during your lunch break, disconnect from technology on the weekends, and use your PTO
- Spend time doing enjoyable activities such as reading, painting, dancing, or traveling

Find community support

- Join a book club, special interest group, sports team, or attend networking events
- Surround yourself with friends who practice healthy habits and make you feel good about yourself



- Try a virtual class, club, or program
 - Volunteer at a food pantry, animal shelter, senior living community, or non-profit organization
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Helpful Resources:

www.stress.org

www.apa.org

Need more ideas or help?

Visit RethinkCare.com/resources for more support.