Stress Less

What is stress?
Stress is a normal physical response to events that make you feel threatened or upset your balance in some way. When danger is sensed – whether it’s real or imagined – the body's defenses kick into high gear in a rapid, automatic process known as the “fight-or-flight” reaction, or the stress response. Not everyone perceives stress the same.

What happens to the body during the “fight-or-flight” reaction?

Is stress positive or negative? Both!
Positive stress can make you feel happy, promote growth, and enhance the quality of life. Positive stress is necessary to keep life exciting, and challenging. Too much negative stress, with no downtime, brings you down and ranges in severity from daily hassles to life-changing events. It should be managed in order to decrease the long-term complications associated with chronic, negative stress.

Too much negative stress can cause or make worse:
- Pain of any kind
- Heart disease
- Digestive problems
- Sleep problems
- Depression
- Obesity
- Autoimmune diseases
- Skin conditions, such as eczema

What are some common positive and negative stressors?
Manage Your Stress

Exercise
Exercise not only promotes overall physical well-being, but it helps you manage emotional stress as well. Being physically fit and healthy will increase your ability to deal with stressors as they arise.

Relaxation and Meditation
Structured relaxation and meditation techniques will help you control stress and improve your physical and mental well-being. Some types of meditation and relaxation therapies are best learned in a specific class; however, it is also possible to learn some techniques on your own. There are hundreds of different types of meditation and relaxation methods, ranging from audio CDs to martial art or fitness classes, such as Tai Chi or Yoga.

Organization Skills
If your physical environment is well organized, you will avoid the stress of trying to find misplaced items and clutter. Take the time to periodically clean out your office, desk, closet, car, etc. to organize your living and work areas.

Time Management
Good time management skills are essential in effectively controlling stress. These skills include:
- Prioritizing Tasks
- Avoiding Conflict and Over-scheduling
- Using a Planner or Calendar

Support Systems
People who have strong support systems experience fewer physical and psychological symptoms of stress. Family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and even pets are all a vital part of your support system. Developing and maintaining a social support network is healthy for both your body and mind.

Reframe the Situation
Reframing is a way of changing the way you look at a stressful event by making it seem more positive. Reframing can depict a really bad day as a mildly low point in an overall wonderful life and helps you view a negative event as a learning experience. Reframing a situation can change your physical response to stress.

Foods That May Help Reduce Stress
- Oranges
- Almonds
- Turkey
- Avocados
- Blueberries
- Soy
- Sweet Potatoes
- Pistachios
- Spinach
- Broccoli
- Low Fat or Skim Milk
- Water
- Dried Apricots
- Walnuts
- Salmon
- Kale
- Brown Rice
- Cantaloupe