

20 Steps You Can Take to Cope with Stress



1. Avoid setting impossible deadlines or goals. Make a realistic list of tasks for each day and tackle them one by one.
2. Engage in vigorous aerobic exercise (jogging, brisk walking, swimming) 20 to 30 minutes three or more times a week.
3. Join a social group outside your family or work, and then make time for it.
4. Learn yoga, deep breathing, meditation or progressive relaxation exercises. Set aside a few minutes each day (for example, a work-break in the mid-afternoon) when you can practice these.
5. Don't let yourself be constantly interrupted or distracted. Learn to ignore the telephone or turn on your answering machine.
6. Find a quiet place where you can spend a few minutes alone each day.
7. When tension mounts, excuse yourself for a few minutes of meditation, deep breathing, or a walk around the block.
8. Avoid constant clock watching. Allow yourself enough time to get to meetings or other obligations.
9. Try to keep hostile feelings in check. If someone or something makes you angry, voice your feelings in a calm, rational manner.
10. Learn to avoid situations that make you tense or angry. If you can't stand waiting in lines at the bank, for example, go at times when the bank is not busy.
11. Cultivate a supportive network of people with whom you can share your feelings and ideas.
12. Take up a hobby or activity you enjoy.
13. Avoid turning to alcohol or cigarettes to relieve tension; the effects are temporary and end up increasing tension.
14. Make sure you get enough sleep.
15. Avoid taking your work home. If this seems impossible, consider whether you are managing your time effectively.
16. Plan at least one vacation a year during which you can truly escape.
17. Learn to manage your finances so that you can avoid constant worry about bills.
18. Try something new occasionally - a different type of ethnic food, a new route to work, a visit to a new art exhibit.
19. Acquire a pet, especially if you live alone. The undemanding devotion of a cat or dog can make living in a frustrating, often hostile world more endurable.
20. Accept your limitations. Every now and then, make a list of your accomplishments and positive aspects of your life.