

TOP TEN TIPS:

These tips are from people learning to cope with their own stress

1. Meet a friend
2. Set aside 10 minutes a day to relax and collect your thoughts
3. Listen to relaxing music
4. Watch a funny movie
5. Taking a walk in the countryside
6. Talking to someone to vent a little
7. Do something good for someone else
8. Painting or drawing
9. Meditating
10. Book a massage or spend time in a spa



Meditation

SEEKING HELP

The first person to approach is your family doctor. There are also a number of voluntary organization's.

Anxiety UK—Monday to Friday 9:30 am to 5:30 pm 08444775774

StepChange—deals with debt problems and can be contacted on 08001381111

Mind Infoline—provides information on mental health topics and can be contacted on 0300 1233393

Samaritans—offers emotional support in full confidence 24 hours a day and can be contacted on 116 123

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How to Manage and Reduce Stress

Otley Action for Older People
Supporting Independent Living



What is stress?

Stress can affect us in various ways, both physically and mentally, in varying intensities.

Research has shown that stress can sometimes be a good thing. It makes us more alert and helps us perform better in certain situations, but this is only if the stress is short-lived.

Excessive or prolonged stress can lead to illness such as heart disease and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

In situations that make you feel threatened or upset, your body creates a stress response. This can cause a variety of physical symptoms, change your behaviour and lead you to experience more intense emotions.

BEHAVIORAL AND EMOTIONAL EFFECTS

When feeling stressed you may experience feelings of anxiety, irritability or low self-esteem. This can lead you to become withdrawn, indecisive or tearful.

You may experience periods of constant worry, racing thoughts or repeatedly go over the same things in your head. Some people experience changes in their behaviour. They may lose their temper more easily, act irrationally or become more verbally or physically aggressive. These feelings can feed on each other and produce symptoms of physical pain. For example, extreme anxiety can make you feel so unwell that you worry you have a serious physical condition.

CAUSES OF STRESS

All sorts of situations can cause stress.

The most common causes of stress usually involve work, money matters, relationships with your partner, relationships with your children or relationships with other family members.

Major life events can also cause stress. For example divorce, unemployment, moving house or a bereavement,

It is also possible for a series of small events or irritations that lead to stress, such as feeling undervalued at work or arguing with a family member. Sometimes there may not be an obvious cause.

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOURSELF

Stress is a natural reaction to difficult situations in life.

As previously mentioned, prolonged periods of stress can lead to physical problems. For example it can lead to lower immunity levels, digestive and intestinal difficulties, or mental health problems such as anxiety or depression.

It is important that we manage our stress and keep it at a healthy level to prevent long-term damage to our bodies and minds.

When you are feeling stressed, try take these steps:

- ◇ Realise when it's causing you a problem
- ◇ Identify the causes
- ◇ Review your lifestyle—are you doing too much

Ways to protect yourself from stress:

- ◇ Eat healthily
- ◇ Be aware of your smoking or drinking
- ◇ Exercise
- ◇ Take time out
- ◇ Be mindful
- ◇ Get some restful sleep
- ◇ Don't be too hard on yourself