

Guide to Effective Stress and Anxiety Management

1. Learn to recognize what triggers stress for you

- Internal Triggers
 - Lifestyle choices (i.e., poor diet, smoking)
 - Negative self-talk (i.e., "I can't do this.")
 - Stressful personality traits (i.e., impatience, chronic worrying)
 - It is important to note that most of our stress is self-generated
- External Triggers
 - Physical Environment
 - Social Interactions with Others
 - Organizational
 - Major Life Events
 - Daily Hassles

2. Learn to recognize your individual symptoms of stress

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Fatigue○ Headache○ Insomnia○ Cold extremities○ Sweating○ Muscle aches or tension○ Heart palpitations○ Stomach cramps○ Nausea○ Psychological<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Decreased memory○ Difficulty concentrating○ Indecisiveness○ Mind racing○ Confusion○ Anxiety○ Depression | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behavioral<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Pacing○ Fidgeting○ Nervous habits○ Increased/Decreased appetite○ Drinking○ Crying○ Yelling○ Physical Violence• Interpersonal<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Nervousness○ Anger○ Frustration○ Worry○ Fear○ Irritability○ Short temper○ Withdrawal |
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3. Tips for Daily Stress and Anxiety Management

- **Keep a positive attitude.**
 - Much of our stress is generated by negative self-talk (internal dialogue).
 - Replacing negative self-talk with positive self-talk will improve your self-confidence, decrease stress and improve overall well-being.
 - Repeat positive phrases to yourself such as: "I can do this", "I can achieve my goals", "People will like me for who I am", "I am in control of my life", "I learn from my mistakes", "I am a good & valued person".

- **Utilize relaxation strategies**
 - Access and utilize the exercises at [Calm.com](https://www.calm.com)
 - Deep Breathing
 - Focus your attention on your breathing.
 - Inhale slowly through the nose and exhale slowly through the mouth.
 - Concentrate on deep breaths in and out.
- **Imagery**
 - Create a mental image of a pleasant and relaxing place in your mind.
 - Involve all your senses in the imagery: see the place, hear the sounds, smell the aromas, feel the temperature, and the movement of the wind.
 - The more intensely you use your imagination to recreate the relaxing place, the stronger and more realistic the experience will be.
 - Enjoy the location in your mind and know that you can return to that place at any time.
 - Use this positive imagery to relax yourself during times of stress, anxiety, or anger.
- **Eat a well-balanced diet**
 - Avoid:
 - Caffeine: it is a stimulant that induces “fight or flight” response.
 - Alcohol: it depletes your body of B vitamins that help you cope with stress.
 - Nicotine: Most ex-smokers report feeling much more relaxed on a general basis.
 - Sugar: Sugar-rich foods raise energy in the short term but cause “crashes.”
 - Skipping meals
 - Make sure your diet includes:
 - Whole Grains
 - Fruits and Vegetables
 - Drinking water in place of sugar and/or caffeine filled drinks
- **Exercise**
 - Releases neurotransmitters that increase feelings of happiness and decrease depression and anxiety.
 - Improves sleep, self-image, and overall health.
- **Manage your time**
 - Set priorities with a to-do list.
 - Mark tasks according to what is most pressing or essential and then work your way down the list to tasks that realistically can be put off.
- **Make time for yourself and use your support system**
 - Always make time for fun activities/hobbies that you enjoy.
 - Talk with your partner, friends, or family. Don’t bottle feelings up inside.