

Pleasurable Activities

(please check)

	Do Now	Would Like To Do		Do Now	Would Like To Do
Walking			Redecorating rooms		
Exploring			Spring cleaning		
Being in the mountains			Reading fiction books		
Being by water			Reading nonfiction books		
Shopping (stores)			Reading magazines		
Going to yard sales			Reading newspapers		
Going to auctions			Driving		
Fishing			Watching T.V.		
Hunting			Working on machines		
Boating			Woodwork/Carpentry		
Camping			Writing letters		
Listening to live music			Writing (stories, poems, etc)		
Listening to CD's			Volunteer work		
Listening to books on tape			Gardening		
Going to movies			Caring for houseplants		
Watching videotapes			Singing		
Getting on the Internet			Dancing		
Playing video/computer games			Playing a musical instrument		
Exercising			Acting		
Playing sports			Going to a party		
Watching sports (live)			Lunch/Dinner with friends		
Watching sports (T.V.)			Visiting people (sick, shut-in)		
Reading about sports			Visiting friends		
Bicycling			Visiting family		
Day trips			Doing things with children		
Vacation			Church		
Collecting things (coins, etc.)			Church-related activities		
Flower arranging			Praying		
Yard work (mowing, trimming)			Reading Bible		
Talking on phone			Meditation/Yoga		
Painting (rooms, furniture)			Playing board games		
Drawing			Cooking		
Doing crafts			Doing housework/laundry		
Painting pictures			Cleaning things		
Ceramics			Cooking		
Playing with pets			Canning & freezing		
Bowling			Swimming		
Knitting/Crocheting			Going to library		
Taking a bath			Playing pool or billiards		
Taking a class			Photography		
Eating out			Going on outings (park, etc)		
Golf			Horseback riding		
Playing cards			Going to plays		
Doing puzzles or crosswords			Sewing/Embroidery		
Other (please specify)			Other (please specify)		

How To Question Stressful, Angry, Anxious, or Depressed Thinking

1. Am I upsetting myself unnecessarily? How can I see this another way?
2. Is my thinking working for or against me? How could I view this in a less upsetting way?
3. What am I demanding must happen? What do I want or prefer, rather than need?
4. Am I making something too terrible? Is that awful? What would be so terrible about that?
5. Am I labeling a person? What is the action that I don't like?
6. What is untrue about my thoughts? How can I stick to the facts?
7. Am I using extreme, black-and-white language? What words might be more accurate?
8. Am I fortune-telling or mind-reading in a way that gets me upset or unhappy? What are the odds or chances that it will really turn out the way I'm thinking or imagining?
9. What are my options in this situation? How would I like to respond?
10. What are more moderate, helpful, or realistic statements to replace the upsetting ones?
11. Have I had any experiences that show that this thought might not be completely true?
12. If my best friend or someone I loved had this thought, what would I tell them?
13. If someone I cared about knew I was thinking this thought, what would they say to me?
14. Are there strengths in me or positives in the situation that I am ignoring?
15. When I am not feeling this way, do I think about this situation any differently? How?
16. Have I been in this type of situation before? What happened? What have I learned from prior experiences that could help me now?
17. Five years from now, if I look back on this situation, will I look at it any differently? Will I focus on any different part of my experience?
18. Am I blaming myself for something over which I do not have complete control?
19. Thinking Mistakes That Create Stress, Anger, Depression, Anxiety, and Worry

All-or-nothing thinking. You see things in black-and-white categories. It is either one thing or another; there is no room for anything in between. "I'm 100% healthy or I must have a fatal disease."

Jumping to conclusions. You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion. "My husband is late because he is in a car accident and is injured on the side of the road."

Fortune-telling. You anticipate things will turn out badly, convinced the prediction is a fact. "Not getting this job will cause us to lose the house."

Should statements. "Musts" and "oughts" are also offenders. Emotional consequences can include anxiety and anger. "I should be able to handle this."

Overgeneralization. Assuming one event is actually a pattern. "My hand is a little shaky today, I must have Parkinson's Disease."

Disqualifying the positive. Filtering out or rejecting positive experiences to maintain negative beliefs. Upon hearing that your spouse has checked all the doors and windows and they are all locked you think, "But someone could cut out a piece of glass and open the window."

Catastrophizing. Predicting the worst possible outcome imaginable. "Terrible," "awful," "horrible," "worst ever" might be key words. "If I can't get my heart to stop pounding I'm going to die."

Superstitious thinking. The thought that something you do prevents something awful from happening. "Giving my spouse a hug and telling her to be careful before going to work will prevent her from getting in a wreck. I do it every morning and she hasn't gotten in a wreck yet."

Emotional reasoning. The belief that because you feel a certain way means that the assumptions and associations you have with that feeling are true. "The fear, doom, and constant anxiety must mean something is seriously wrong with me."

coping with stress



Stress and Stressors

Stress is something that is part of normal life, in that it is experienced by everyone from time-to-time. However, some people suffer from stress which is so frequent or so severe that it can seriously impact on their quality of life. Stress can come from a huge range of sources (*stressors*), such as:

- ◇ Relationships with others
- ◇ Work-related issues
- ◇ Study demands
- ◇ Coping with illness
- ◇ Life changes, such as marriage, retirement, divorce
- ◇ Day-to-day activities and tasks
- ◇ Positive events, such as organising holidays or parties
- ◇ Juggling many roles or tasks at the same time



Some people are aware of what tends to trigger their stress, and this increases their ability to either prevent stress or to handle it more effectively. Many others are less able to deal with stress, and identifying stressors is a key step in this. If you often experience stress, take some time to consider what tends to set it off for you.

Symptoms of Stress

Some people do not even notice that they are stressed until symptoms begin to occur, including:

- ◇ Irritability or moodiness
- ◇ Interrupted sleep
- ◇ Worrying or feeling of anxiety
- ◇ Back and neck pain
- ◇ Frequent headaches, minor to migraine
- ◇ Upset stomach
- ◇ Increased blood pressure
- ◇ Changes in appetite
- ◇ Rashes or skin breakouts
- ◇ Chest pains
- ◇ Making existing physical problems worse
- ◇ More susceptible to cold/flu and slower recovery

These symptoms reduce quality of life, and people suffering from stress may notice that work performance or relationships suffer more as a result. You may be able to use some the strategies listed here, or you may find it useful to consult a professional for more help.

Stress Management Tips

- 1) **Identify your stressors**, and see if there are some things within your control to manage better. Some things will be beyond your control, for example if you work a job that is based on working towards deadlines then you can't change this without changing jobs. But perhaps you can control some aspects, such as scheduling to have at least a short lunch break each day, or to go to bed earlier so that you have more energy to cope with the daytime.
- 2) Build **regular exercise** into your life - as well as being part of a healthy, balanced lifestyle and giving you more energy, many people find that working out at the gym or playing sport helps them to unwind.
- 3) Make sure that you **eat and sleep well**.
- 4) **Take time out** for family, friends and recreational activities. Most of us know that this is important but we do not all do it. If you find it hard to make time for this, perhaps you need to take deliberate steps to have time out, such as set aside one evening a week where you meet up with friends or enjoy a hobby, or set aside one day of the weekend for relaxing at home.
- 5) **Problem-solving techniques** can be a useful way of clarifying the problem, brainstorming possible solutions, and then choosing one to put into action after listing the pros and cons of each option. See the handout *Problem Solving* for more details about this.
- 6) **Learn calming techniques** such as controlled breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, to train your mind and body to become more relaxed. These techniques require practice but can be helpful with regular use. See handouts *Calming Technique* and *Progressive Muscle Relaxation*.
- 7) You may wish to speak to a professional about **assertiveness training and communication skills** which can help you to deal with challenging situations more effectively, thereby reducing stress. See the handout *Assertive Communication*.
- 8) Last but definitely not least, consider whether there is **negative thinking** which is contributing to your stress. Negative thinking can make us worry more than is necessary, increasing stress, and generally does not motivate us to take positive actions. See the handouts *Thinking & Feeling*, *Analysing Your Thinking* and *Changing Your Thinking*.



Grounding Exercise

1. This is best-done standing and looking outside or a picture of the outdoors.
2. Take a couple of deep breaths and become aware of how grounded your feet are to the floor.
3. Become aware of any tension, stress, or emotion in your body.
4. Imagine your breath is going to that area and releasing any build-up.
5. Become aware of your surroundings, noticing small details that are often missed.
6. Be grateful for one small detail.
7. Feel a connection to that one detail.
8. Scan your environment again, breath, and then look away.

Mindful Eating

1. Take a piece of chocolate or a raisin and hold it in your hand.
2. Take a couple of deep breaths.
3. Put the food in your mouth slowly.
4. Smell the food, sense it, and savor each bite.
5. Try to smile between bites to slow down the time.
6. Become aware of the sensations from eating.
7. Let the food linger for a while and then swallow it.
8. Smile after eating the food.

Loving-Kindness Exercise

1. Look at a pleasant picture.
2. Take a couple of deep breaths.
3. Repeat very slowly, "May I be happy, well, and filled with kindness and peace."
4. Whatever negative thoughts pop into your head, bat them away.
5. Think of it as blessing yourself.
6. You can substitute "I" for the name of another person.
7. Take another couple of deep breaths and look away.

Positive Self-Talk

1. Look at a pleasant picture or look outside.
2. Take a couple of deep breaths.
3. Repeat slowly, "I am strong, patient, and kind." Or "My body is efficient; it burns fat." Or "My body is smart; it can heal." Or "My body doesn't need to hold on to emotion, tension, or stress." Basically, you can use any statement that empowers you.
4. Repeat these statements over and over while breathing deeply.
5. Feel the words fill your body.
6. Breaths and look away.

One-minute Mini Meditations from psych central

We have all heard the data on the wonderful impact meditation has on our wellbeing. Setting aside 30 minutes during the day for meditation can be a challenge or at times feels nearly impossible. But I know you all have a minute to spare. Give them a try and see if you can increase focus, stay energized and present. Here are 7 different methods. They all begin the same way.

Sit upright in a chair with both feet flat on the floor or stand straight with weight equally distributed on both feet. Hands are down by your side. Eyes are focused outdoors, on a pleasant picture, or closed. Set a timer for 60 seconds and begin.

Breathing Meditation

1. Close your eyes.
2. Take a couple of deep breaths being careful to breathe from the stomach and not the chest.
3. Breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth.
4. Become aware of your breath as it travels in your body, allow it to fill your lungs and empty them.
5. As you breathe out, feel the release of any tension.
6. If your mind slips away, gently direct it back to your breathing.
7. Try breathing deeper each time you breathe.
8. Open your eyes.

Emotion Release

1. Look at a calm lake, ocean, or another body of water (this can be a picture of one).
2. Take three very deep breaths in and out.
3. Become aware of what you are feeling.
4. Acknowledge that feeling and don't reject or judge it, accept it.
5. Say, "It's OK that I feel that way, anyone in my position would feel this way as well."
6. Imagine taking that emotion from inside you and form it into a ball.
7. Imagine throwing that ball into the water and watch as the ripples form and slowly move ashore.
8. Take another deep breath, celebrate the release of the emotion, and look away.

Guided Imagery

1. Close your eyes and take a couple of very deep breaths.
2. Imagine standing in a shower and as the water washes over you, it takes all the tension from your muscles away.
3. Now think of a place that is peaceful to you (it could be a meadow, beach, forest, or even a city).
4. Imagine standing there and look all around using all 5 senses to take in the place.
5. Imagine turning around to see all around you.
6. Imagine walking towards something and then sitting down for a while.
7. Take another couple of deep breaths as if you are breathing in your surroundings.
8. Open your eyes.