

# Stress Management

## Ways to Relieve Stress

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The best way to manage your stress is to learn healthy **coping strategies**. You can start practicing these tips right away. Try one or two until you find a few that work for you. Practice these techniques until they become habits you turn to when you feel stress. You can also use this **coping strategies form** (What is a **PDF** document?) to see how you respond to stress.

Stress-relief techniques focus on relaxing your mind and your body.

### Ways to relax your mind

- **Write.** It may help to write about things that are bothering you. Write for 10 to 15 minutes a day about stressful events and how they made you feel. Or think about **tracking your stress**. This helps you find out what is causing your stress and how much stress you feel. After you know, you can find better ways to cope.
- **Let your feelings out.** Talk, laugh, cry, and express anger when you need to. Talking with friends, family, a counselor, or a member of the clergy about your feelings is a healthy way to relieve stress.
- **Do something you enjoy.** You may feel that you're too busy to do these things. But making time to do something you enjoy can help you relax. It might also help you get more done in other areas of your life. Try:
  - A hobby, such as gardening.
  - A creative activity, such as writing, crafts, or art.
  - Playing with and caring for pets.
  - Volunteer work.
- **Focus on the present.** Meditation and guided imagery are two ways to focus and relax your mind.
  - **Meditate.** When you meditate, you focus your attention on things that are happening right now. Paying attention to your breathing is one way to focus. **Mindfulness-based stress reduction** is one form of meditation that is very helpful with managing stress and learning how to better cope with it.  
**Stress Management: Doing Meditation**
  - **Use guided imagery.** With guided imagery, you imagine yourself in any setting that helps you feel calm and relaxed. You can use audiotapes, books, or a teacher to guide you.  
**Stress Management: Doing Guided Imagery to Relax**



## Ways to relax your body

- **Exercise.** Regular exercise is one of the best ways to manage stress. Walking is a great way to get started. Even everyday activities such as housecleaning or yard work can reduce stress. Stretching can also relieve muscle tension. For more information about becoming more active, see the topic [Fitness](#).
- **Try techniques to relax.** Breathing exercises, muscle relaxation, and yoga can help relieve stress.
  - **Breathing exercises.** These include roll breathing, a type of deep breathing.  
[Stress Management: Breathing Exercises for Relaxation](#)
  - **Progressive muscle relaxation.** This technique reduces muscle tension. You do it by relaxing separate groups of muscles one by one.  
[Stress Management: Doing Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#)
  - **Yoga, tai chi, and qi gong.** These techniques combine exercise and meditation. You may need some training at first to learn them. Books and videos are also helpful. You can do all of these techniques at home.  
[Stress Management: Practicing Yoga to Relax](#)

You might like to try a combination of these techniques.

### [Stress Management: Relaxing Your Mind and Body](#)

In addition to practicing these skills, you might also try some [other techniques to reduce stress](#), such as massage or music therapy.

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