

December

Fight Stress with Healthy Habits

Healthy habits can protect you from the harmful effects of stress. Here are 10 positive healthy habits you may want to develop.

- 1. Talk with family and friends.**
A daily dose of friendship is great medicine. Call or writer friends and family to share your feelings, hopes and joys and ask them to share theirs.
- 2. Engage in daily physical activity.**
Regular [physical activity](#) can relieve mental and physical tension. Physically active adults have lower risk of depression and loss of mental functioning. Physical activity can be a great source of pleasure, too. Try walking, swimming, biking or dancing every day.
- 3. Embrace the things you are able to change.**
While we may not be able to do some of the things we once enjoyed, we are never too old to learn a new skill, work toward a goal, or love and help others.
- 4. Remember to laugh.**
Laughter makes us feel good. Don't be afraid to laugh out loud at a joke, a funny movie or a comic strip, even when we're alone.
- 5. Give up the bad habits.**
Too much alcohol, cigarettes or caffeine can increase blood pressure. If you smoke, decide to quit now. If you do drink alcohol, do so in moderation.
- 6. Slow down.**
Try to "pace" instead of "race." Plan ahead and allow enough time to get the most important things done without having to rush.
- 7. Get enough sleep.**
Try to get six to eight hours of sleep each night. If you can't sleep, take steps to help reduce stress and depression. [Physical activity](#) also may improve the quality of sleep.
- 8. Get organized.**
Use "to do" lists to help you focus on your most important tasks. Approach

big tasks one step at a time. For example, start by organizing just one part of your life — your car, desk, kitchen, closet, cupboard or drawer.

9. Practice giving back.

Volunteer your time or spend time helping out a friend. Helping others helps you.

10. Try not to worry.

The world won't end if your grass isn't mowed or your kitchen isn't cleaned. You may need to do these things, but right now might not be the right time.

Learn more:

- [The AHA Recommendations for Physical Activity in Adults](#)
 - [What is stress management?](#)
-