

# Strategies for Effective Stress Management

When situations are perceived as a threat or challenge, it may trigger a "flight-or-fight" response. Generally, after the response occurs, our bodies will relax. However, mental and physical harm can occur when there is frequent, severe, or prolonged stress. Here are some strategies to manage persistent stressors and relax.

1

## Identify your sources of stress

Look closely at your habits, environment, and attitudes and accept responsibility for controlling and maintaining the stress in your life. In your journal, ask yourself these questions: "What caused my stress?" "How did I physically and emotionally feel about it?" "How did I react?" "What did I do to make myself feel better about it?"

2

## Reflect on how you currently cope with stress

Do you cope with your stress in a healthy or unhealthy way? Some unhealthy coping mechanisms include: smoking, drinking, overeating or under eating, withdrawing from friends and family, sleeping too much, procrastinating, and lashing out at others. Healthy coping mechanisms include identifying and avoiding stressors, altering stressors, adapting to stressors, and accepting stressors.

3

## Make time for fun and relaxation

Taking time to relax and recharge may help you handle stressors in a healthier way. Some ways may include going for a walk, spending time with family and friends, taking a long bath, exercising, listening to music, and reading.

4

## Integrate a healthy lifestyle

Improving your physical health is very beneficial to your mental health. Improving physical health can include regular physical exercise, eating a healthy and balanced diet, limiting caffeine and sugar, getting the recommended amount of sleep, and avoiding self-medicating with alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.



### References:

- Healthline Editorial Team. (2020, February 25). *Everything you need to know about stress*. <https://www.healthline.com/health/stress>
- Robinson, L., Smith, M., & Segal, R. (2019, March 27). *Stress Management: How to reduce, prevent, and cope with stress*. BrainLine. <https://www.brainline.org/article/stress-management-how-reduce-prevent-and-cope-stress>

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