



Common Stress Symptoms and Tips to

MANAGE STRESS

Take this list of common stress symptoms and post it somewhere convenient, such as the fridge, to help you become more aware of the warning signs of stress. Flip the page over to see a list of tips to help you manage your stress. These may help lessen your symptoms.

Body

- Headaches
- Aching muscles
- Back pain
- Neck or jaw pain
- Indigestion
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Insomnia
- High blood pressure
- Shortness of breath
- Racing heart
- Fatigue

Behavior

- Being bossy
- Criticizing or blaming
- Overeating or undereating
- Abusing alcohol
- Smoking more
- Using drugs
- Crying unexpectedly
- Exploding in anger
- Stuttering or laughing nervously
- Grinding teeth or chewing gum excessively
- Failing to get anything done
- Withdrawing from people

Feelings

- Anxiety
- Irritation (being on edge)
- Boredom
- Frustration
- Anger
- Loneliness
- Sadness
- Depression
- Fear
- Moodiness
- Sense of being overwhelmed
- Powerlessness (feeling that things are out of control)

Thoughts

- Confusion
- Difficulty concentrating
- Forgetfulness
- Lack of creativity
- Indecisiveness
- Loss of sense of humor
- Pessimism
- Worry
- Doubt
- Thoughts of failure
- Desire to run away
- Low self-esteem

Quick Stress-Relief Tips

Once you become aware of a stress symptom, you can try some of these quick tips to help you relax and break the stress cycle.

- Stop and take several slow, deep breaths.
- Go for a quick walk around the block or neighborhood.
- Take a hot shower or bath.
- Pet your cat or dog.
- Talk to a friend or loved one.
- Distract yourself with something comforting. Make a cup of tea, put on your favorite scented hand lotion, water your plant, chat with a coworker.
- Get up and stretch.
- Massage your neck and shoulders for a couple of minutes.
- Get out in nature, even if this just means sitting under a tree in a park during your lunch hour.
- Make a list of the things that are worrying you or the tasks that need doing. When you are feeling overwhelmed or out of control, this may help you feel more focused and in control.
- Close your eyes and imagine yourself somewhere peaceful and beautiful.
- Smile. Smiling is believed to stimulate endorphins, your body's feel-good chemicals.
- Write in a journal.
- Listen to soothing music.
- Play or spend time with your child.
- Assert your opinions, thoughts, and feelings respectfully.
- Hug someone.
- Take some time for yourself and do something you enjoy.
- Watch a funny movie or spend time with people who make you laugh.
- Face the problem: Take positive steps to address real problems.
- Accept what you cannot control.

Ask your health care practitioner if there are any tests, referrals, or treatments that might be helpful to use along with your current treatment plan.

