

Breaking Away From Stress

Stress is caused by your body's natural instinct to defend itself. While that is a good thing when you are in danger, it can take a toll on your health when it goes on too long in response to life's daily challenges and changes

Stress can result from any sort of change, even a positive one. It can come from on-going pressures of work, finances, family and relationships; or it can result from situations that are difficult or hard to control. Stress can make you feel anxious, afraid, worried, or uptight. It can cause tension, sleeplessness, irritability, memory loss and problems with concentration.

Stress can also cause a variety of health problems. Physical signs of stress can include a stiff neck, back pain, headaches, upset stomach, indigestion, heart pounding, and shortness of breath. On-going stress can lead to high blood pressure and a lowered resistance to illness and injury.

Staying physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy requires recognizing stress and finding ways to minimize it.

You can help manage the stress in your life by taking the following steps:

- Don't worry about things you can't control, like the weather or other peoples' decisions. Look at your lifestyle and see what you CAN control to help make you more comfortable, secure and relaxed.
- Try to look at change as a positive challenge, not a threat. Remind yourself of your strengths and successes.
- Use relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, deep breathing, or massage.
- Get moving. Walk, run, ride a bike, swim, play tennis. Exercise will help relieve pent-up energy and tension and help you feel more relaxed.
- Eat healthy foods and get enough rest.
- Tackle one task at a time and don't strive for perfection. Don't get overwhelmed by trying to do too much at once.
- Get away from stressful situations for a while – read a book, watch a movie, play a game, listen to music.
- Have some fun. Talk, laugh, and play with people you enjoy.

**Find the stress-busting tricks that work for you,
and incorporate them into your life every day.**

You will feel good doing what is good for you!