

Stressed Out?

You have the right to relax, to feel good, to be happy.

-John Mason Ph.D.

Stress is the body's physical, mental, and chemical reaction to things that frighten, excite, confuse, endanger, or irritate us. It's impossible to go through life without stress, and you wouldn't want to - it is stress which enables you to handle everyday challenges as well as extraordinary conflicts. It is only when our daily stress becomes distress that we are in danger.

Strategies to Prevent Stress Build-Up

1. **Go with the flow.** The key to going is to remember that life is in the here and now, each day at a time. We can relive yesterday only as a memory and experience tomorrow only in anticipation.
2. **Keep your life in balance.** Everyone needs time for family, work, socializing, and being alone. Don't give too little attention to one of these areas of life. Everyone needs time for contact with other human beings, for having fun, and for contacting our inner selves.
3. **Take control of your environment.** Develop good time management techniques, an assertive lifestyle. Learn to say "no" occasionally - you can relieve yourself of unnecessary pressures by not always trying to please everyone.
4. **Slow down.** When you act rushed, you will feel pressure. Slow your step when you walk; slow your speech when you talk!
5. **Develop a support group.** We have close friends who act as consultants to us in our roles and without them our lives would be harder and not nearly so rewarding. They can act as sounding boards or provide a shoulder to lean on.
6. **Work on your sense of humor.** Don't take yourself so seriously. Laugh at yourself!
7. **Learn from what you do.** Don't be so critical when you make a mistake.

Most importantly: love and respect yourself at all times. Be gentle with yourself - no put-downs! Remember you're a human being, not a perfectionist!