



Give your mind a little TLC

Learn tips to handle stress



When you or a loved one are stressed or anxious, it can seem that even daily tasks feel harder than usual.¹ But we want you to know that you're not alone. While it's always a good idea to talk to a professional about your mental health, following these tips may help you better manage your stress and increase your ability to deal with what life throws your way.² This is called resiliency and it can make you stronger in challenging times.

- **Change your perception.** Stressful events are bound to happen in life, and while you may not be able to change them, you can change how you react. When dealing with a difficult moment, try keeping in mind that this will pass and the future will be better.³
- **Embrace change.** Sometimes life throws curveballs your way and what you had in mind may not be within reach anymore. Accepting when things can't be changed can help you focus on what you may be able to control, like your attitude or your approach to dealing with them.³
- **See your doctor.** If you're not feeling well, don't assume that it's no big deal or it'll pass. Your doctor can help you decide if your symptoms are due to a physical or mental health problem and help you create a plan to feel better.
- **Watch what you eat.** A healthy, balanced diet fuels your body and keeps your blood sugar steady. This helps prevent mental highs and lows that can make depression and anxiety seem worse.⁴
- **Get moving.** Regular exercise can help you feel less stressed, depressed and anxious. It can even help you sleep better. Check with your doctor before developing a fitness plan.⁵
- **Manage your stress.** Pay attention to how you're feeling and don't take on too much. Know your limits and only take on what you can handle.⁵
- **Get to know your triggers.** Be mindful of what may be causing you to feel stressed. For example if watching the news makes you tense, take a break.⁵ Remember, it's OK to say "no."
- **Connect with others.** Surround yourself with positive, caring people, and spend a lot of time with them. If you don't have supportive people in your life, seek them out by joining a support group.⁵
- **Save time for yourself.** Make time each week to do something you enjoy, as this can give life more meaning and purpose.⁵



Sources:

1 National Alliance on Mental Illness website: What is Mental Illness and Mental Health by the Numbers (accessed February 2018): nami.org.

2 Mental Health America website: Staying Well When You Have a Mental Illness (accessed February 2018): mentalhealthamerica.net/sites/default/files/staying_well1.pdf.

3 American Psychological Association website: The Road to Resilience (accessed February 2018) apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx.

4 The Center for the Improvement of Human Functioning International website: Mood Swings and Depression: Let's Get to the Bottom of It (accessed February 2018): orthomolecular.org/library/articles/mood.shtml?ct=39992.

5 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: Coping with Stress (accessed February 2018) cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/coping_with_stress_tips.html.

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After experiencing extreme stress, tragedy or a traumatic event, it's common to have strong emotions and reactions that linger for a while. These strong emotions are often normal.

- Disbelief and shock
- Feeling sad, frustrated, helpless, numb, angry, guilty, tense and irritable
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Crying
- Reduced interest in usual activities
- Wanting to be alone
- No desire for food or loss of appetite
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Nightmares or bad memories
- Reoccurring thoughts of the event
- Headaches, back pains, and stomach problems
- Increased heart rate and difficulty breathing
- Increased smoking or use of alcohol or drugs

You've got support

If you or a loved one is struggling with a mental health issue, let your doctor know right away. You can also visit [mentalhealth.org](https://www.mentalhealth.org) to see resources near you.

You're not alone

Feelings of hopelessness are dangerous and can often manifest when we're unable to cope with stress, depression and unexpected life events. If you or someone you know is having a hard time, seek medical help and reach out to these useful resources.

Disaster Distress Helpline: **1-800-985-5990**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **1-800-273-TALK**

