Stress Management

How to Manage Stress

1. Identify the sources of stress in your life. (pressures, worries, conflicts, responsibilities)
2. Ask yourself these questions about each of your stressors:
   a. Can I change this situation?
   b. Can I change my perception of this situation?
   c. Can I change my capacity to deal with this situation?
3. Form a plan to manage your stress based on your answers to these questions.

If you can change the situation...

Do it! Examples: If procrastination and disorganization are causing you stress, change the situation by using time management strategies. Or if you’re overwhelmed with all of your social obligations, choose to eliminate some of them.

If you sense that a change could be made, but you’re unsure of what to do, seek help.

If you can’t or don’t want to change the situation... Try changing your perception!

Sometimes it’s challenging to separate facts from fiction. When you have stressful thoughts, try fact checking them. Some questions to ask yourself:

- Would most anyone feel the same way in this situation?
- Would I feel the same way about this situation if I wasn’t feeling so _______? (tired, hungry, depressed, overwhelmed, sad, lonely, anxious)
- What would I tell a younger friend if they told me they were having these thoughts?
- Am I using stressful words like “always” “never” “should” and making unhelpful judgments about the situation?

If you find that negative self-talk is stressing you out, try replacing negative thoughts with more kind and gentle self-talk. (For example, “I’m going the best I can.” or “Whatever happens, I can handle it.”)

Often we are hard on ourselves because we think it will motivate us to improve, but self-criticism actually decreases your sense of self-esteem, and your ability to make meaningful and lasting changes. Self-compassion is key!

Quick Stress relievers:
- Stretching and self-massage
- Guided imagery/visualization
- Deep breathing and relaxation exercises
- Find something to laugh at
- Walk or run
- Journal
- Arts and crafts; coloring books
- Make music, sing
- Listen to music
- Read for enjoyment
- Care for pets and plants
- Try a “One Moment Meditation” http://www.onemomentmeditation.com/

Contact us
Health Promotion
2010 Tang Center
Berkeley, CA 94720
uhs.berkeley.edu/hp
uhs.berkeley.edu/healthcoaching

Make an appointment with a health coach
Online: etang.berkeley.edu
In-person: Appointment Office
Phone: 510-642-2000, press 4 then 1
How to build your capacity to deal with stress

- Make time for basic self-care: Get enough sleep and eat regularly.
- Engage in regular physical activity. Vigorous exercise is great for releasing stress. Yoga can be very relaxing.
- Spend time outside to get sunlight and fresh air. Connect with nature through activities like hiking, gardening, or squirrel watching.
- Schedule time for hobbies and pleasurable activities.
- Maintain social connections. Communicate your needs and boundaries clearly.
- Create a regular meditation or spiritual practice
- Manage your time with a calendar and prioritized to-do list

Where to find help

Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) offers individual counseling at multiple campus locations as well as skills and support groups [www.uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling](http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling)

Health coaches can help you create an individualized stress management plan [www.uhs.berkeley.edu/healthcoaching](http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/healthcoaching)

Don’t be afraid to reach out to your support network: Friends, family, mentors, spiritual leaders, community groups, neighbors, co-workers, etc.

Tang Tip: *Guided relaxation exercises can be found all over the internet! Get started by going to [www.uhs.berkeley.edu/bewell/](http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/bewell/)

Go to the “Stress” section and click on “Deep Breathing and Relaxation Exercises”