5 Steps to help you feel better and reduce stress

1. Know What Stresses You

Everyone is different. Something that bothers your friend may be fun for you. Learning to recognize what stresses you is the first step to dealing with it.

Notice your stress. Is it good or bad stress? What caused it? Is it likely to happen again? Can you do anything to change it?

Make a list. Write down times you feel stressed. Notice what you do. What helps? What makes it worse?

Set goals. Which problems or stresses will go away by themselves? Which need attention?

2. Make a Plan

Results take time. But a plan can help manage your stress.

Learn stress-management skills. Explore a variety of active and quiet activities and then decide what works for you.

Make dates with yourself. Use a calendar. Set aside time to do the things you plan to make you reduce stress.

Stay on track. Keep goals realistic. Give yourself rewards along the way. Find someone to support your efforts.

Take your time. Take the time you need to reach your goals.

3. Take Care of Your Body

A healthy body can help you handle stress.

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Eat healthy food. You are what you eat. Everything we put into our body has an effect (either positive or negative) on how you feel.

Break a sweat. Exercise several times a week. Take a walk when you feel worried or stuck. Exercise increases your endorphins which elevates your mood.

Refuel. Carry a <u>water</u> bottle. Believe it or not, dehydration can alter your mood. You feel better when your body has the right amount of fluid.

Take a break. Daydream for 15 minutes. Think about a happy place.

Come up for air. Breathe!

Get rest.

4. <u>Take Care of Your Feelings</u>

Your mind and emotions need attention too.

Take time out. Count to 100. Take a nap. Walk away from situations that are not supportive.

Plan ahead. Rest before a stressful event. Break your goals into small steps.

Treat yourself. Plan fun, relaxing times that you will enjoy.

Value yourself.

5. <u>Ask for Help.</u>

Get help if it is too much to handle by yourself.

Learn to seek and accept help.

See a health care provider. Get a complete physical. Medical illnesses can cause our mood to be altered.

Get professional help. Find out about counseling services.