



MANAGING YOUR STRESS

Stress can be good for you—it's true! Stress can keep your life from being dull and unexciting. Believe it or not, stress can add *interest*, *motivation*, and *opportunity* to your life. The trick is to learn to use stress energy in a positive way to meet life's challenges.

There's no getting away from it—stress is with us all the time. It comes from mental, physical, and emotional activity—things students are involved with each day.

An expert in the field of stress, Dr. Hans Selye, defines stress as a “non-specific response of the body to a demand.” Our body is programmed to *repair* the damage caused by *normal* stress, but when tension becomes *prolonged* or extremely *intense*, the body's repair system can't keep up with the demand. That's when trouble can start.

Stress has been linked to such health problems as migraine headaches, high blood pressure, heart disease, backaches, and insomnia. Some research even links stress to such serious illnesses as cancer.

There is nothing you can do to eliminate all stress from your life, but here are some strategies experts say can help you avoid dangerous levels of stress:

- **Exercise** Physical activity helps to release pressure and tension.
- **Discuss Your Stress** Talk it out with friends, family, teachers, a spiritual advisor, or a counselor.
- **Use Good Time Management and Organizational Strategies** Developing these habits will lessen your tension.
- **Relax Your Body and Mind** Take deep, regular breaths; mentally visualize a tranquil place; listen to calming music; take short breaks or naps; stretch; take a warm bath; read.
- **Take Care of Yourself** Eat a balanced diet, get plenty of sleep, get a massage.
- **Take Time for Fun** Include time for relaxation and recreation in your schedule—this will help you to feel renewed and refreshed; laugh.
- **Be Accepting of Yourself** Don't demand perfection in *any* area of your life—you can't be the flawless student, daughter, son, husband, wife, etc. because *no one* is perfect. Expecting that kind of performance of yourself will lead to disappointment, depression, and stress.
- **Be Flexible** Learn to accept change and disappointment as normal, natural occurrences in life—always have a backup plan in case things don't work out the way you expect them to.

- **Take Action Against Depression** If you begin to feel sad, lonely, or bored, don't hide in your room—help yourself by reaching out to others; get involved in positive activities.
- **Avoid Self-Medicating** Over-the-counter medications, recreational drugs, or alcohol don't eliminate the *conditions* that cause your stress and may become habit-forming thereby creating even *more* stress in your life.
- **Think Positive Thoughts:**
 - ❖ Your “I will” is more important than your I.Q. –*Author Unknown*
 - ❖ If you think you can, or you think you can't—you're right! –*Henry Ford*
 - ❖ Your chances of success in any undertaking can always be measured by your belief in yourself! – *Robert Collier*
 - ❖ No one can make you feel inferior without your consent. –*Eleanor Roosevelt*
 - ❖ Everybody can be great...you only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love. – *Martin Luther King, Jr.*
 - ❖ Life is an exciting journey—remember to enjoy the ride! --*Sherry D'Attilio*
- **Remember Sometimes it Takes Several Tries to reach success:**
 - ❖ Baseball legend Babe Ruth struck out 1330 times, but he also hit a record breaking 714 home runs.
 - ❖ English novelist John Creasey got 753 rejection slips before he successfully published 564 books.
 - ❖ General Douglas MacArthur's application to West Point was turned down twice before he was accepted.
 - ❖ Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team.
 - ❖ Winston Churchill, one of England's greatest Prime Ministers, failed the sixth grade.
 - ❖ R.H. Macy's first department store failed seven times before finally becoming a success.