



Stress Management Strategies

1. Avoid unnecessary stress

Not all stress can be avoided, and it's not healthy to avoid a situation that needs to be addressed. You may be surprised, however, by the number of stressors in your life that you can eliminate.

- ***Learn how to say “no”*** – Know your limits and stick to them. Whether in your personal or professional life, refuse to accept added responsibilities when you're close to reaching them. Taking on more than you can handle is a surefire recipe for stress.
- ***Avoid people who stress you out*** – If someone consistently causes stress in your life and you can't turn the relationship around, limit the amount of time you spend with that person or end the relationship entirely.
- ***Take control of your environment*** – If the evening news makes you anxious, turn the TV off. If traffic's got you tense, take a longer but less-traveled route. If going to the market is an unpleasant chore, do your grocery shopping online.
- ***Avoid hot-button topics*** – If you get upset over religion or politics, cross them off your conversation list. If you repeatedly argue about the same subject with the same people, stop bringing it up or excuse yourself when it's the topic of discussion.
- ***Pare down your to-do list*** – Analyze your schedule, responsibilities, and daily tasks. If you've got too much on your plate, distinguish between the “should” and the “musts.” Drop tasks that aren't truly necessary to the bottom of the list or eliminate them entirely.

2. Alter the situation

If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Figure out what you can do to change things, so the problem doesn't present itself in the future. Often, this involves changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life.

- ***Express your feelings instead of bottling them up.*** If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. If you don't voice your feelings, resentment will build, and the situation will likely remain the same.

- ***Be willing to compromise.*** When you ask someone to change their behavior, be willing to do the same. If you both are willing to bend at least a little, you'll have a good chance of finding a happy middle ground.
- ***Be more assertive.*** Don't take a backseat in your own life. Deal with problems head on, doing your best to anticipate and prevent them. If you've got an exam to study for and your chatty roommate just got home, say up front that you only have five minutes to talk.
- ***Manage your time better.*** Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you're stretched too thin and running behind, it's hard to stay calm and focused. But if you plan and make sure you don't overextend yourself; you can alter the amount of stress you're under.

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