

10 STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING YOUR STRESS



Nearly 61% of respondents to a recent survey on stress reported they were at least somewhat stressed; however, 81% reported they managed their stress at least somewhat effectively. We've pulled together these tips, based on their responses, to help others manage their stress.

- 1. Know your triggers.** Stress produces physiological responses – your body tenses, your heart rate rises, and you become flustered/scattered. Reflect on what, or who, triggers your stress and develop effective coping strategies or, if possible, avoid those situations altogether.
- 2. Stay healthy.** Keeping your body and mind strong by maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help build your stress tolerance and resiliency. Avoid unhealthy coping strategies (e.g., drinking, smoking) and focus on eating well, getting enough sleep, and exercising regularly.
- 3. Regain control.** According to [Professor Cary Cooper](#), the “feeling of loss of control is one of the main causes of stress and lack of wellbeing.” Recognize and accept that there will always be situations outside of your control and give yourself permission to let those things go. Be sure, however, to regain control of the things you can, even if they seem small.
- 4. Maximize your support network.** Maintain healthy relationships with your friends and family. Ask for help when you need it – whether it is just someone to talk to or one who can offer assistance. Remember that these relationships are reciprocal . . . be prepared to support those in your network as well.
- 5. Sort out your priorities.** Consider all the things that you're juggling and identify what's really important. A [prioritizing grid](#) is a great tool to help with this activity.
- 6. Plan ahead.** If you know there is going to be a particularly stressful time coming up at work or at home, reflect on what you'll need to help you cope. Consider both what you can add to (e.g., an additional fitness activity, more sleep) or remove from (e.g., carpool duty for the upcoming school trip) your routine.
- 7. Remember to play.** Think about the activities that you love and make you laugh and feel energized (e.g., hiking, running, reading, knitting, listening to music, painting). Recharge and re-energize yourself by taking time, every day, to enjoy life; laughter truly can be the best medicine.
- 8. Reframe your thinking.** Consciously make an effort to focus on the positives rather than the negatives. Consider what you can do rather than what you can't. Ask yourself, is this a small inconvenience or a major catastrophe and be realistic in your appraisal. Remember that a small problem can seem huge when you're either already feeling overloaded or not taking care of yourself.
- 9. Take a moment.** When experiencing a stress response, take a moment to practice stress reduction strategies. Focus on your breathing, count to 10 in your head, or repeat a mantra (e.g., “I am calm. I can handle this crisis”). After a brief break, you'll be able to better process what's happening and respond appropriately.
- 10. Relax and reward yourself.** Take time to relax and unwind after a particularly stressful time. Whether it's a sweet treat, a night out on the town, or a vacation to a tropical island, a reward for “surviving” stress is always well deserved.



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