

Managing Stress

We all experience stress in different ways – it’s a part of everyone’s life, other times it’s not. Sometimes it’s “good” stress (a job promotion, wedding, graduation, moving to a new home). When you get right down to it, when it comes to stress, what matters is how you respond to it. The way we take in and then act upon stress can influence whether we experience it as “negative” or “positive” stress.. The good news is, there are some things you can change to make stress less problematic, and there are ways to lessen or let go of the stressors you can’t change.

Chronic negative stress can contribute to chronic conditions and can make symptoms harder to manage. Stress can accumulate - one stressor can lead to others, or magnify existing stressors. It is important to be able to recognize warning signs of chronic negative stress.

Everyone recognizes that stress is often unavoidable. Therefore, finding positive ways to manage stress matters. It is often overseen since “everyone” has stress, we just have to “with it”. Stress is more powerful than we may admit and can rob us our energy and health. Having some tools available for times to come may make your day one day.

Check in on your stress level

The following are possible signs you are experiencing chronic stress.

- Biting your nails, pulling your hair, tapping your foot or other repetitive habits
- Grinding your teeth or clenching your jaw (may experience jaw pain or ‘TMJ’)
- Frequent headaches, neck or shoulder pain
- Feeling anxious, nervous, helpless, or irritable
- Frequent accidents
- Forgetting things you usually don’t forget
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue and exhaustion



Sort your stressors into 4 categories:

- Important and Changeable,
- Important and Unchangeable,
- Unimportant and Changeable,
- Unimportant and Unchangeable.

Discover the 90/10 Principle

10% of stress is what actually happens to you.
90% of stress is your *reaction* or *PERCEPTION*.



IMPORTANT & CHANGEABLE	IMPORTANT & UNCHANGEABLE
<p>Take action to change the situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and set goals • Imagine the problem solved (What does that look like?) • Seek social support 	<p>Change the way you think about the stressor (perception)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Gratitude • Practice Acceptance • Distraction <p>Dissect the problem. Find parts you can ‘reclassify.’</p> <p>Change your reaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write about the facts and your feelings • Seek social support
UNIMPORTANT & CHANGEABLE	UNIMPORTANT & UNCHANGEABLE
<p>Let It Go OR Take Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and set goals • Imagine the problem solved (What does that look like?) • Seek social support 	<p>Let It Go</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distraction