

Managing Stress

Stress is a factor in everyone's life.¹ Whether you have a lot of stress or a little, stress is something that you need to know how to manage. When you don't manage stress or you manage it in an unhealthy way, it can have a harmful effect on your health.²

Smoking is not an option

People who smoke sometimes use cigarettes as a way to manage the stress in their lives.³ Smoking releases chemicals in the brain that help lower anxiety for a short time.³ But smoking does great harm to your body. Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your body. It can help you live longer and avoid many serious health problems. There are many healthier ways you can cope effectively with stress.³

Healthy stress busters

Some ways you can manage stress *and* maintain your health include²:

- **Give yourself the right to relax.** Try to carve some time out of each day to do something that gives you peace.³ You may want to listen to music. You may want to read or work on a hobby²
- **Practice relaxation techniques.** Some relaxation techniques to try include^{2,3}:
 - Deep breathing
 - Meditation
 - Yoga
 - Massage therapy
- **Get some physical activity.** Doing something active can help relieve tense muscles. Go for a walk, ride your bike, swim. It can help lift your spirits, too²
- **Make contact with others.** Don't keep it all inside. Talking about how you feel with other people can help relieve stress. It may put you in a better mood, too. If stress is really bothering you, you may want to see your doctor or a counselor²
- **Take good care of yourself.** Eat a healthful diet. Limit caffeine and alcohol. Get enough sleep and regular exercise. These things can all help to keep your energy levels up and keep you in better health^{1,2,4}

Try to think positively. When you quit smoking, you've taken the best step you can to help stay healthy.⁵ Congratulate yourself for this great achievement.

BEAT THE PACK

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