

KEY SOLUTIONS

KEY CLUB MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES

Reducing Stress

“Stress Stinks!” How can you reduce it? Life often gets cluttered and bogged down with excessive activities, pressing deadlines, and difficult homework and school tasks. Living a life of non-stop chaos can be very difficult. It is vital that you find a personal balanced lifestyle. By reducing the “stress factors” in your life and by exemplifying the following tips, you can produce self-satisfaction and peace of mind.

1. **Learn to plan.** Disorganization can breed stress. Having too many projects going simultaneously often leads to confusion, forgetfulness, and the sense that uncompleted projects are hanging over your head. When possible, take on projects one at a time and work on them until completed.
2. **Recognize and accept limits.** Most of us set unreasonable and idealistic goals for ourselves. We can never be perfect, so we often have a sense of failure or inadequacy no matter how well we perform. Set achievable goals for yourself.
3. **Learn to play.** You need occasionally to escape from the pressures of life and have fun. Find pastimes which are absorbing and enjoyable to you no matter what your level of ability is.
4. **Be a positive person.** Avoid criticizing others. Learn to praise the things you like in others. Focus upon the good qualities those around you possess. Be sure to give yourself credit and appreciate your own good qualities, as well.
5. **Learn to tolerate and forgive.** Intolerance of others leads to frustration and anger. An attempt to really understand the way other people feel can make you more accepting of them. Accept and forgive yourself also.
6. **Avoid unnecessary competition.** There are many competitive situations in life that we cannot avoid. Too much concern with winning in too many areas of life can create excessive tension and anxiety, and make us unnecessarily aggressive.
7. **Get regular physical exercise and eat well.** Check with your physician before beginning any exercise program. You will be more likely to stay with an exercise program if you choose one that you really enjoy rather than one that feels like pure hard work and drudgery. Be sure that you are eating well, which includes breakfast everyday!
8. **Learn a systematic, drug-free method of relaxing.** Meditation, yoga, or any of a variety of relaxation techniques can be learned from various accredited teachers and licensed psychotherapists.
9. **Talk out your troubles.** Find a friend, member of the clergy, faculty member, counselor, or psychotherapist with whom you can be open. Expressing your "bottled up" tension to a sympathetic ear can be incredibly helpful.
10. **Change your thinking.** How we feel emotionally often depends on our outlook or philosophy of life. Changing one's beliefs is a difficult and painstaking process. There is little practical wisdom in the modern world to guide us through our lives. No one has all the answers, but some answers are available.

Other great tips include

- **Laugh.** When you're in a stressful situation, remember that no matter what happens, life goes on. Laughing feels good, and the deep breaths you take when you laugh can help you relax.
- **Do something enjoyable.** Be sure that you participate in something enjoyable each day. If you like to read, for example, spend a few minutes before bed reading.
- **Manage your time.** Planning ahead can make your day much easier. At the beginning of the day, list the things you have to do in order of importance and work from the top. Keep in mind that things always take longer than you expect, so pad your schedule. If possible, break down a big project into small chunks instead of trying to do it all at once.
- **Learn how to say no.** Don't spread yourself too thin. If you are involved in too many activities, quit one or two that are less important. This will give you more time for yourself.
- **Take time to relax each day.** Relaxing is not a waste of time – your body needs it. Go for a walk, read or sit and enjoy peace and quiet. A long bath can also help soothe your nerves. Activities like these don't take long, but can make a big difference.
- **Be assertive.** If you think someone is being unfair or too demanding, let him or her know. It can make you feel better and may reduce some of the pressure.

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Revised 10/06