



How to best manage your stress

This activity sheet contains a number of exercises and tips for you to use when ready. You are welcome to save and print these as a collection or simply print individual exercises as needed.

It's good to know what's on your plate right now and also how you are dealing with it. This information will help you reflect on your stressors and offer some tips and tools as to how to manage stress in the best way for you.

What are your current stressors?

Select any of the things from the list below that are currently affecting you:

- ☐ Relationships
- ☐ Work
- ☐ Physical Health
- ☐ Finances
- ☐ Leisure
- ☐ Romance
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Parenting
- ☐ Mental Health
- ☐ Career

What is the biggest source of stress in your life right now? Jot down a few words about it.

Now we've identified the sources of stress in your life, let's take a look at how you react to these stressful things? Select any that apply:

- ☐ It makes me irritable
- ☐ It affects my sleep

- ☐ It makes me feel anxious
- ☐ It makes me feel down
- ☐ It affects my relationships
- ☐ I find it more difficult to relax and calm down
- ☐ It causes my health issues to flare up
- ☐ It makes it hard for me to manage my emotions
- ☐ I experience changes in my eating habits
- ☐ I experience changes in my sleeping patterns

Taking a problem solving approach

Think of an issue that is causing you stress right now. Maybe it is managing a health condition, or perhaps it is a situation at work, or conflict with someone you care about. Take a moment to break it down.

What is the problem? (You might want to break it down into its parts)

Brainstorm and write down as many ideas as you have that might help to solve to problem, no matter how silly they seem:

Now consider the pros and cons of each idea:

Choose one of the possible solutions that looks likely to work, based on the advantages and disadvantages:

Plan out a step by step of what you need to do to carry out this solution - what? When? How? With Who? What could cause problems? How can you get around those problems? Is it realistic and achievable?

Try a mindfulness exercise

When doing a mindfulness exercise, pay attention to the following things:

- Be aware of what your body is doing. Be aware of your thoughts, and what is going on in your body. Notice any bodily sensations.
- It is normal to get distracted. When this happens, notice you got distracted and bring your attention back to your breath.
- Notice what is happening without judgement. Allow thoughts, feelings, sensations in the body and anything else that comes up to just be there. Notice how these change and pass.

With regular practice, mindfulness is an effective way to manage stress and maintain calm.

Who are your social supports?

Make a list of the people who might be useful for you during stressful times. These are people whom you could reach out to, or those around you who just make your day or week better. Making a list can help you identify people you might like to reach out to more often.

Name of Person	How this person supports me Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● good for a laugh● great to catch up with for a coffee● great to do an activity with● they are there to listen● this person gives great advice● this person helps me out when I need it● this person is allowed to see me at my worst● this person can help me out (e.g. finances, moving things, computer problems)

Self Care Exercise

When looking for stress reducing activities, we don't have to start from scratch. Most people will have things that they have done in the past that have been really effective in reducing stress. These include things like exercise, creative or social activities, or time spent in nature or outdoors. Take a moment to record the activities in each of these areas that might be useful and restorative for you in times of stress.

Rest/Relaxation

--

Creative expression/Hobbies

--

Health

--

Companionship

--

Stress Busting Techniques

You might like to try out one or two of these stress busting techniques. You can also add these to a Self Care list. Try one that you think will work best for you right now.

- ❑ **Exercise:** Did you know that a good cardio session boosts serotonin (the feel good chemical) and reduces cortisol (the stress hormone)? Even a quick stroll in the morning or evening can help reduce stress.
- ❑ **Say no:** If you're overwhelmed with responsibilities, make a point not to take on more than you can handle. It's totally OK to say no.
- ❑ **Simplify:** Cut your to-do list down to half. You can pick up the rest tomorrow.
- ❑ **Delegate:** Share the load with others. You are not superwoman/superman. You'll find that others are generally happy to help.
- ❑ **Take time out:** Schedule 10-20 minutes each day to quietly reflect. Listen to music, do some gentle stretching or breathing, and clear your mind of stress (note: you're probably on your phone a lot of the time so why not replace this with some time out)

If doing any of these exercises brings up tough stuff for you, please talk to a trusted family member, friend, GP or one of the services there to support you. You can find some of these contacts on our Get Help page.

For additional support, we encourage you to follow the recommendations provided to you in your Personal Snapshot Report.