



MENTAL HEALTH

SMALL YET EFFECTIVE WAYS TO COMBAT STRESS

Everyone experiences stress – be it at work, at home, on the road, etc. Sometimes we can feel especially stressed out when relationships take their toll or there’s additional pressure to perform at one’s best.

Although in certain instances stress can be seen as a positive motivation, called “eustress”, according to Mayo Clinic, “distress”, i.e. stress that’s left unchecked, can contribute to many health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity and diabetes.

Fortunately, there are a number of ways to help combat stress, in order to ensure that your health is not compromised.

Health experts from Cleveland Clinic suggest the following ways to help you stress less...

1. Watch what you eat and drink. “Alcohol and food abuse may seem to reduce stress, but it actually adds to it.” Eating healthy foods can also help to boost your mood.
2. Don’t be afraid to say “no” to other’s demands. Set realistic deadlines, not taking on more than you can handle.
3. Exercise regularly. Aerobic activities like walking and running release feel good hormones that help you to feel better and give you energy.
4. Show your affection. Studies have proven that hugging and kissing may help to lower stress and blood pressure.

5. Work on developing a healthy sense of self-esteem. “When you are feeling overwhelmed, remind yourself of what you do well.”
6. Find and practice relaxation techniques, for example breathing exercises, yoga and meditation.
7. Write it down. If there’s something on your mind, keep a note of it so that you don’t have to worry about it all day. A good idea is to also jot down what you are grateful for.
8. Make time for leisure and social activities like reading, going out with friends or treating yourself to a massage.
9. Learn to manage your time better. “Effective time-management skills involve asking for help when appropriate, setting priorities, pacing yourself and taking time out for yourself.”
10. Get more sleep. Lack of sleep is a significant cause of stress. Limit caffeine intake after 3pm and aim to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.

Although stress is a part of life, there are many ways to help release some of the pressure you may feel. If you find that your health is taking a toll as a result of too much stress, it’s best to consult with a professional.