

Hospice and Palliative Services

12 ways to manage your stress

Listed below are common symptoms of stress. Mark those you have experienced during the past several months: A-Always, F-Frequently, and O-Occasionally. If you mark "A" or "F" to several of these, seek new ways to manage stress, and do consult your healthcare provider for symptoms that worsen or persist.

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|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue/Exhaustion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea/Indigestion | <input type="checkbox"/> Under or overeating | <input type="checkbox"/> Bowel problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lump in throat | <input type="checkbox"/> Aching muscles | <input type="checkbox"/> Tension/Anxiety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability | <input type="checkbox"/> Depressed mood | <input type="checkbox"/> Forgetfulness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inability to focus | <input type="checkbox"/> Worrisome thoughts | <input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skin flare-ups | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor accidents | <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent colds/flu |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heart racing | <input type="checkbox"/> Worsening of existing medical conditions | |

First, make a list of the things that trigger your stress. Then, do something about the things you CAN change or eliminate. Finally, learn to deal successfully with the things you CANNOT change. Here are 12 ideas to get you started:

1. Engage in regular physical exercise, if you are able.
2. Write down 3 things you are thankful for at the end of each day.
3. Get things off your chest by talking to a trusted friend or writing in a journal.
4. Play calm background music to help create a peaceful environment at home.
5. Resist too much caffeine, alcohol and sugar.
6. Relax your standards. The world won't end if the dishes aren't done.
7. Inhale as you count to 4; Exhale as you count to 4. Continue for 4 minutes.
8. Take a "mini-vacation" as you focus on a peaceful picture in your mind.
9. Do at least one thing each day that you enjoy.
10. Keep a to-do list rather than rely on your memory.
11. Don't sweat the small stuff, and choose your battles carefully.
12. Repeat the serenity prayer: Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.