

# Ways to Manage Stress

Feeling stress is a common reaction after disasters. But stress can make it more difficult to recover. Too much stress can even harm a person's health.

Learning how to manage stress in healthy ways is important for moving on with life. Each person responds differently to stress. No single method for managing stress works for everyone or every situation. But there are many different ways for managing stress. Here are some approaches that might work for you.

## Connect with others.

Seek out family and friends. A strong support system will help protect you from the effects of stress.

If you or others are sick, use the phone or e-mail to limit person-to-person contact.

Talk to someone you trust.

Find a mental health provider or faith-based support.

## Focus on the positive.

Take a moment to think about the good things in your life.

## Get enough rest.

Try to get eight hours of sleep each night. Sleep recharges your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired can make it hard to think clearly. It can also increase the chances of an accident.

## Do something enjoyable every day.

Make time for activities that bring joy. (For example, go for a walk, work in the garden, play with a pet, play a musical instrument, read a good book, etc.)

## Use relaxation methods.

Practice methods for relaxing. Slow, deep breathing; muscle relaxation; meditation; yoga; stretching; and listening to quiet music are examples of ways to help lower stress.

Faith-based methods may be a powerful source of calmness for some people.

## Exercise regularly.

Make time for at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times per week. Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress. Avoid using the gym if you or other people are sick.



## Eat a healthy diet.

Eat a balanced diet high in fresh fruits and vegetables and foods with whole grain and low in fat, salt, and sugar.

Use caffeine and sugar in moderation.

Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.