

Euporama



Your well-being is our challenge

A summer without stress?!

Between balancing finances, caring for aging parents and the demands of work and family, it's not surprising that many of us live in a constant state of stress.

Stress can be a positive force that helps you get the job done, improves your performance and keeps you alert. However, experiencing constant high levels of stress can be harmful to both your body and mind.

Continuously feeling stressed is considered a contributing risk factor for many health problems including heart diseases, depression, burn-out, ...



Although it is not possible to remove stress from your life completely, you do have more control over it than you might think.

How can you cope with stress?

Find the source!

The first step in successfully managing stress is to uncover what your biggest stressors are. Although this seems easy, it can be very difficult to pinpoint the actual causes. For example, it may not be your job demands that are draining you but how you organize and prioritize around work. Perhaps your workload at home leaves you feeling too exhausted to focus well at work.

A great way to discover your most common stressors is to start a stress journal. It only takes a few moments to write down what caused your stress, what your thoughts and feelings were and what your reaction was. This will help you see the pattern and the circumstances that contribute to the stress.

Stay away from stress!

While it's not recommended to try 'total stress avoidance', you will be surprised by how much stress you can eliminate by just staying away from it.

Know your limits. As hard as it can be, sometimes "no" or "not right now" is the right answer. Prioritize what truly must be done, when and why. Realize what you can and can't do in both your home and professional life. Sometimes we expect more from ourselves than anyone else would expect from us.

Be creative. If the daily drive to work is making you tense, explore alternative modes of transportation or look for ways to make the commute a more pleasant experience. If grocery shopping trips are taking up too much time, try stopping at your local market on your way home from work.

Avoid stressing people. If there's someone in your life that is always causing you stress, see if you can limit the amount of time you spend with him/her or consider how to address your concerns with him/her.



Make a change!

If you can't avoid a stressful situation, figure out how you can change it so the problem won't continue into the future. Be sure to:

Open up. If something or someone is bothering you, talk about it. Keeping things bottled up will only cause more resentment and the situation will never improve. Even if you just share your frustration with a close friend or family member, getting your feelings out can help you release some of your stress.

Negotiate. Although it's a challenge, look for solutions everyone can live with. If your spouse wants you to spend more time with the children, but you're extremely busy at work, look for windows of time where you might be able to take a break and make up the time later.

Accept that you cannot change everything!

Sometimes it's just not possible to change what is causing you stress. Instead, try to change your expectations and attitudes that may be contributing to your stress. Start to:

Think about the big picture. If something is bothering you, try to step back and evaluate it: Is this actually important? Will it have any impact on you in a month, a year or even a week from now? If not, you should be focusing your time and energy on what is truly important.

Be realistic. No one is perfect, including you. Aim for reasonable standards, look for possible solutions and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Find the positive. If something is stressing you out, try to find your 'inner optimist'. Reflect on all the positive, happy things you have going for you in life including your relationships with family and friends, workplace positives and your valuable personal and professional achievements. This will help you keep things in perspective.

Let go. Recognize when events are out of your hands. Stop trying to control the uncontrollable and focus on the things you do have power over including your own reactions, meanings, emotions, conclusions and actions in response to an event.

Lean on others. If you're having a hard time coping, try opening up to a friend or make an appointment with a professional counselor. Talking about your problems will not only help you release your feelings, it may also reveal some practical solutions.

Take good care of yourself!

Don't get so caught up in the stress of your daily life that you forget to meet your own needs. If you regularly set aside time for yourself you will be better equipped to handle the stressors that are heading your way. Make sure you:

Get healthy. One of the best ways to release tension is to exercise regularly. Ideally this should be 30 minutes of activity a day. But don't stress if you can't manage that. Some minor actions will also do: take the stairs, park further away or play an active game with your child. Exercise should be coupled with a healthy and balanced diet. Too much fat, salt, sugar, alcohol and caffeine will actually end up draining your energy.

Catch up on your sleep. Try to get a full nights rest. If that isn't possible, consider power napping or on the spot relaxation techniques to let your mind and body rest. Feeling tired will increase your vulnerability to stress.

Take a time out. Read a book or share a laugh with your friends. Set aside time and don't let your other responsibilities creep in. This is an opportunity to forget about your stress, recharge and refocus your energy.

Did you know ...

... that Belgians are stressed-out people?

Eight out of ten Belgians pretend to have stress. The main causes for stress are: work, financial worries and/or loss of job.

Compared to men (77%), women (86%) are more often bothered by stress, and three out of ten

Belgians say sleeplessness is causing them stress.

An average of 22% of European employees suffer from stress at work.

In Belgium almost a third part of all employees has stress at work. The most important causes of stress at work are high work pressure, poor work-life-balance, and lack of support.



Should you have questions on this subject or if you would like to discuss your personal situation with a counselor, do not hesitate to contact your EAP using the toll free number:

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