

newsletter

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**QUICK TAKES**



It can be hard to manage stress if you don't know what's causing it. When you feel overwhelmed, it can seem as if everything is stressing you out.

Try to identify the biggest sources of your stress. Then make plans that will help you deal with the stressors. Below are some of the most common causes of stress.

- Commuting stress
- Workplace stress
- Family/Home stress
- Relationship stress
- Financial stress
- Health stress
- Environmental stress
- Life changes/uncertainties.

**10 Tips for Time Management**

Do you feel like you're constantly playing catch-up? Improving your time management skills on the job can help you accomplish what you need to get done on schedule and it's a great way to manage your stress. That means having more downtime to relax and enjoy your life. Start making the minutes count with these tips:

- 1. Start with a plan.** Many people start the day without a clear concept of what they need to get done. If you're stressed at work, make a plan for the next day right before you leave work in the evening. That way you'll be set to hit the ground running the next morning.
- 2. Focus on quality, not quantity.** It's always satisfying to complete tasks. People sometimes do nine out of ten of the things they need to do, putting off the most difficult one. When you plan your time, make sure to prioritize tasks.
- 3. Tackle difficult tasks in the morning.** Most people's energy level is highest in the morning. Get started on the day's most demanding task then. You'll likely finish it faster when your concentration is highest.
- 4. Skip the settling-in routine.** Take a close look at your morning routine. Do you always stop for coffee on the way to work? Do you check email and read headlines before starting your work? Putting off your real work might just add to your stress. Consider starting the day by digging right into work. Then make those little moments a reward for completing a task.
- 5. Eliminate distractions.** It's easy to get side-tracked in today's super-wired workplace. Look for ways to stay focused when you have an important task: turn off the incoming message alerts in your email program, forward your calls to voicemail and close your office door if you have one.
- 6. Beat procrastination.** Getting started on a tough task is usually the hardest part. Here's a trick to help you get cracking: set a timer for ten minutes and tell yourself you only have to work on it for that long. By the time it goes off, you may be so focused that you plow ahead and finish the job.
- 7. Scale back.** If you've tried to plan out your tasks and you still don't have enough time to finish during your workday, look at ways to scale back. See if you can take less important items off of your list or reschedule them for a later time. If necessary, talk to your manager about your most important priorities.
- 8. Delegate (whenever possible).** Some of us hold on to responsibilities because we think we're the only ones who can do them the right way. Try this rule of thumb: "If someone else can do it 80 percent as well as I can, let them do it." If you're in the position to delegate tasks, just make sure to give the other person clear guidance and follow-up to make sure the job gets done. If you're not in a position to delegate tasks, talk to your boss about distributing your workload.
- 9. Choose the right communication medium.** Is it more time-efficient to pick up the phone or send an email? To decide, ask yourself whether a more "static" or more "interactive" type of dialogue needs to take place. Email is great for a simple exchange of information, but if a situation requires some back-and-forth, you're better off having a conversation.
- 10. Plan your schedule two days ahead.** Once you start to get the hang of managing a daily schedule, start planning two days in advance. This can help you feel in control — which, in turn, combats stress and does wonders for your sense of well-being.

# Stress. What you need to know.

## Good Stress

Some stress can actually be good for you – if you learn to meet the challenge and manage it wisely.

In general, stress that comes from opportunities – changes that challenge you, push you and essentially make life "interesting" – can energize you, motivate you, and help you concentrate and succeed. It all depends on how you perceive and choose to handle the situations.

## Managing Stress

Fear, uncertainty and change – both good and bad – cause stress. It's a fact of life. It can't be eliminated; it can be managed.

The key to surviving stressful changes is to recognize your level of control. You essentially have two options for managing stress. Option 1, if you have sufficient control over the source, is to change it – shop in a different store, take a different route to work and so on.

But there are some things you can't control – your age, the weather – and nothing you do is going to change them. Accepting this simple, yet significant point makes all the difference in the world, and brings you to option 2: Change the way you cope with the stress.

Both options require a take-charge attitude and a bag of tricks – a handful of strategies that help you move from recognition of a stressful situation to action.

## Healthy Body for a Healthy Mind

Stress may play on your mind, but you feel it in your body. The stronger you are physically, the better prepared you are to handle the emotional challenges life dishes out. Here are some healthy habits that bolster your defenses.

- Rest. Most of us need seven to eight hours of sleep a day.
- Regular physical activity. Exercise releases tension, helps ease anxiety and depression, and improves your sleep. It strengthens the heart and other parts of the body potentially harmed by stress.
- A good diet. Plenty of produce, not-too-much caffeine, little to no alcohol and regular meals will keep you on an even keel.
- Time off. Whether it's to laugh, lounge or leave town, balance work and commitments with play.
- Support. Time with family or friends can help ease your worries.

There is no quick fix for stress. It takes determination, persistence and patience, but the payoff is relief, renewed energy, improved health and a priceless sense of well-being.

## Roasted Tomato Sauce

Here is an easy way to transform an abundance of tomatoes into a versatile sauce. Serve it over pasta, stir it into stews or spread it on crostini.

### Ingredients

Olive oil cooking spray  
2 ½ pounds sun-ripened tomatoes  
3 cloves garlic, unpeeled and sliced in half  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
¼ cup tomato juice  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
1 teaspoon olive oil  
½ teaspoon dried oregano leaves  
½ cup sliced fresh basil leaves

### Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Spray a baking sheet and sides with cooking spray.
2. Slice tomatoes in half and place cut-side up in the prepared pan. Add garlic to the pan. Sprinkle the tomatoes with salt and pepper and spray all with cooking spray.
3. Roast for 25 minutes, stirring once. Remove from oven; pour tomato juice into pan, and scrape bottom to loosen clinging particles. Let cool slightly.
4. Remove and discard garlic skins. Transfer tomato mixture and garlic to a food processor. Add vinegar, olive oil and oregano. Pulse until coarsely pureed. Add basil and pulse briefly to mix.

**Make ahead tip:** The sauce can be made in advance and refrigerated or frozen. It's best to add the basil just before serving, however, because it turns black if left in the sauce too long.

Makes: 4 Servings | Takes 40 Minutes

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