GETTING A HANDLE ON STRESS
Proven Strategies for Managing Stress

Recognizing that stress has a lifelong influence on you, what can you do about handling it? Researchers have come up with a few suggestions on how to live with stress.

1. **WORK OFF STRESS** - If you are angry or upset, try to blow off steam physically by activities such as walking, running, playing tennis, or gardening. Physical activity allows you a “fight” outlet for mental stress.

2. **AVOID SELF-MEDICATION** - Although there are many chemicals, including alcohol, that can mask stress symptoms, they do not help you adjust to the stress itself. Many are habit-forming, and can cause more stress than they solve. The ability to handle stress comes from within you, not from the outside.

3. **SLEEP AND EAT WELL** - Lack of sleep can lessen your ability to deal with stress by making you more irritable. Most people need at least 7-8 hours of sleep out of every 24 hours. If stress repeatedly prevents you from sleeping, you should inform your doctor. Similarly, unhealthy or irregular eating habits interfere with your ability to cope with stress.

4. **BALANCE WORK AND RECREATION** - “All work and no play can make Jill a nervous wreck.” Schedule time for recreation to relax your mind and body.

5. **DO SOMETHING FOR OTHERS** - Sometimes when you are distressed, you concentrate too much on yourself and your situation. When this happens, it is often wise to do something for someone else, and get your mind off of yourself. There is an extra hours bonus in this technique—it can help make friends.

6. **GIVE IN ONCE IN AWHILE** - If you find the source of your stress is other people, try giving in instead of fighting and insisting you are always right. You may find that others will begin to give in too.

7. **TAKE ONE THING AT A TIME** - It is self-defeating to try to tackle all your tasks at once. Instead, set priorities and work on the most urgent.

8. **LEARN TO ACCEPT WHAT YOU CANNOT CHANGE** - If the problem is beyond your control at this time, try your best to accept it until you can change it. It beats spinning your wheels and getting nowhere.

9. **TALK OUT YOUR WORRIES** - It helps to share worries with someone you trust and respect. This may be a friend, family member, clergyman, teacher, or counselor. Sometimes another person can help you see a new side to the problem and thus, a new solution. If you find yourself becoming preoccupied with emotional problems, it might be wise to seek a professional listener, like a guidance counselor or psychologist. This is not admitting defeat. It is admitting you are an intelligent human being who knows when to ask for assistance.

10. **LEARN AND PRACTICE A RELAXATION TECHNIQUE**