

# Stress Management Tip Sheet

Try these 10 strategies to calm your mind and reduce your stress.

- 1 Go barefoot.**

Spending time in nature can boost your mood and tame stress, but studies reveal you may get even more of a benefit by strolling around your backyard without socks and shoes.
- 2 Get moving.**

Just 30 minutes a day of moderate exercise, such as a brisk walk, can help boost your mood and limit the effects of stress on your body. Bonus points if you exercise outdoors in the sunshine.
- 3 Play with a pet.**

When you touch your pet, your body releases oxytocin — a hormone that’s linked to positive mood. Plus, studies show that pet owners — especially those who have dogs — tend to have greater life satisfaction, better self-esteem, and reduced levels of loneliness and anxiety. Caring for a pet also gives your life more purpose and keeps you active.
- 4 Meditate.**

Meditation is a form of mindfulness, which anchors you to the present moment. Meditating on a consistent basis, even for short periods of a few minutes, may help boost your mood and decrease symptoms of stress.
- 5 Take a nap.**

It’s a misconception that you can’t make up lost sleep. Inserting a nap when your energy level is low or you’ve had a bad night’s sleep can actually reduce stress and help your brain return to high performance quicker. Studies show the best nap length for most adults is 10–20 minutes.
- 6 Get a hug.**

Physical touch, such as hugging, releases oxytocin (also known as the “cuddle hormone”). Oxytocin is associated with higher levels of happiness, lower levels of stress, and a greater sense of relaxation. So don’t be afraid to ask a loved one for a hug when you need it. It’s one of the simplest forms of stress relief available.
- 7 Plan a date with nature.**

Studies show that spending time in green spaces such as parks, forests, and even local botanical gardens is a healthy way to manage stress. Turn off your cell phone and truly immerse yourself in nature for the best results.
- 8 Practice gratitude.**

Thanking others more often may lower your stress levels. In one recent study, people who did nice things for friends and family during stressful times had fewer health issues than those who didn’t.

**9 Set aside time for self-care.**

Listen to your favorite tunes. Read a good book. Relax in the bath. Volunteer. Sing to an audience of one. Whatever it is, set aside time — even just 5 to 10 minutes — for yourself each day. Even caring for others is self-care, which boosts mood and well-being for everyone involved.

**10 Bonus Tip: Seek help when you need it.**

These are just a few of the countless ways to reduce stress on your own. If you're experiencing overwhelming stress, consider making an appointment with a therapist (online or in-person) or visiting a trusted health care professional to discuss ways to improve your mental health. There's no shame in admitting you need help.

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