

Are You Stressed?

Dealing with Stress

- 1. Embrace silence.** Too much noise can stress you out, so try spending time in complete silence, especially in the morning when the level of cortisol—the stress hormone—is at its highest. Too much cortisol over time can put you at risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, and impaired mental performance. Make time every day to live without the “techno” gadgets that may rule your day...cell phones, pagers, ipods, BlackBerries, etc. Turn off the TV and computer. Take drives in your car *without* the car radio.
- 2. Be playful!** Play releases worries, negative emotions, and frustrations. The activity you choose doesn't matter. The key is to cultivate the right attitude toward anything you do, to immerse yourself in the activity and to lose yourself in the here and now. Set aside 15 minutes every day to do something that is pure fun.
- 3. Hang out with good friends more often.** Hanging out with friends increases prolactin levels. Prolactin is a bonding hormone that also decreases stress. With your friends, you can savor the chance to talk, laugh, and temporarily escape from your worries. Making time for friends doesn't have to be difficult, and the variety of ways to spend time with friends is endless. Keeping it a simple get together is the key...or you will add stress just making this an event!
- 4. Breathe deeply.** Under stress, you're apt take quick, shallow breaths, which increases heart rate and sweating and raises your stress levels even more. Get control of your breathing and the spiraling effects of stress will automatically become less intense.
- 5. Soak in a hot bath.** A hot bath can work wonders to relieve stress and can also set the stage for a good night's sleep. Fill a tub with scented bubble bath, oils, or salts. Bring a good book to read. If you're in a more romantic mood, light some candles, too.
- 6. Listen to soothing music.** A positive mood triggers a wide range of physiological responses: lowered heart rate and blood pressure, improved immune response, and reduced experience of pain.
- 7. Stay hydrated.** Staying hydrated can lessen the effects of and fatigue.
- 8. Be thankful!!!!** Next time you're stressed, stop and write down five things that you're grateful for at that moment. Writing down a grateful list helps people realize there can be stressful things and wonderful things at the same time.
- 9. Turn it all over to God; be intentional in your prayer life.** Step out in faith especially when you are afraid. Leave your troubles and yourself in His infinite love and care.