

# Live Your Life Well: 10 Tools for Reducing Stress

Let's face it: If you're on this planet, you probably have stress. Unfortunately, too much stress can really drain your ability to rest, feel good, be productive, think, have relationships, have fun—pretty much everything humans need to do to survive and thrive. But the 10 Tools listed below offer proven, healthy ways to deal with stress and boost your well-being. We'll show you effective steps to start up—and stick with—the tools.

## Getting Started

- ✓ **Pick a tool or two.** You might skim and think about some of the tools. You might try a few over time. Look for ways to use the tools that suit your personality.
- ✓ **Take notes.** Writing can organize your thoughts. Create as specific a plan as possible. Also list what you hope to get out of the tool, which you can refer to if your will starts to sag.
- ✓ **Schedule your change.** Put your selected activity in your calendar as you would an appointment—and keep it. Try to see the activity as a regular part of your life, like brushing your teeth.
- ✓ **Get support.** Change isn't always smooth, so ask a friend to join you—or at least listen to your starts and stops. Consider joining a club or group that can help you achieve your goals.
- ✓ **Think ahead.** Avoid setbacks with a little planning. Do you need to pack healthy snacks to resist the call of the lunch cart? Do you need to record your TV show so you can get to sleep on time?

## Tips for Using the 10 Tools

- ✓ **Keep track.** Seeing your accomplishments can boost motivation; seeing setbacks can reveal areas to improve. Try a free online progress tracker like the one at [joesgoals.com](http://joesgoals.com), or create your own.
- ✓ **Beat boredom.** If you're feeling ho-hum, shift the way you use a tool. If you've chosen to "do good," instead of donating to charity this time, consider checking on your neighbor.
- ✓ **Cut yourself slack when you fail.** 60% of people who achieve their New Year's resolutions flop on the first try. But don't give up. Repetition strengthens pathways in your brain, so sticking with a new behavior gets easier the more you do it.
- ✓ **Reward yourself when you do well.** Yes, success is its own reward—but a massage after a workout is pretty good too.

Now let's get started...

# Ten Tools for Reducing Stress

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## 1) Connect with Others.

People who feel connected are happier and healthier--and may even live longer.

## 2) Stay Positive.

People who regularly focus on the positive in their lives are less upset by painful memories.

## 3) Get Physically Active.

Exercise can help relieve insomnia and reduce depression.

## 4) Help Others.

People who consistently help others experience less depression, greater calm and fewer pains.

## 5) Get Enough Sleep.

Not getting enough rest increases risks of weight gain, accidents, and heart problems.

## 6) Create Joy and Satisfaction.

Positive emotions can boost your ability to bounce back from stress.

## 7) Eat Well.

Eating healthy food and regular meals can increase your energy, lower the risk of developing certain diseases and influence your mood.

## 8) Take Care of Your Spirit.

People who have strong spiritual lives may be healthier and live longer. Spirituality seems to cut the stress that can contribute to disease. Not into organized religion, try meditation.

## 9) Deal Better with Hard Times.

People who can tackle problems or get support in a tough situation tend to feel less depressed. Use the resources around you and be proactive in dealing with problems as they arise.

## 10) Get Professional Help if You Need It.

More than 80 percent of people who are treated for depression improve. Even if you don't think your problems require counseling, a good therapist will support you with any positive changes you want to make in your life, no matter how small.