

# Stress Management

How to reduce, prevent, and cope with stress

## Identify the sources of stress in your life

It may seem that there's nothing you can do about your stress level. The bills are not going to stop coming, there will never be more hours in the day for all of your errands, and your career or family responsibilities will always be demanding. But you have a lot more control than you might think. In fact, simple realization that you're in control of your life is the foundation of stress management.

Managing stress is all about taking charge: taking charge of your thoughts, your emotions, your schedule, your environment, and the way you deal with problems. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun – plus the resilience to hold up under pressure and meet challenges.

Stress management starts with identifying the sources of stress in your life. This isn't as easy as it sounds. Your true sources of stress aren't always obvious, and it's all too easy to overlook your own stress-inducing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Sure, you may know that you're constantly worried about work deadlines. But maybe it's your procrastination, rather than the actual job demands, that leads to deadline stress.

To identify your true sources of stress, look closely at your habits, attitude, and excuses:

- ❖ Do you explain away stress as temporary even though you can't remember the last time you took a breather? "I just have a million things going on right now"
- ❖ Do you define stress as an integral part of your work or home life "Things are always crazy around here" or as a part of your personality? "I have a lot of nervous energy, that's all".
- ❖ Do you blame your stress on other people or outside events, or view it as entirely normal and unexceptional?

Until you accept responsibility for the role you play in creating or maintaining it, your stress level will remain outside of your control

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*"Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day is the rest we take between two deep breaths."*

*-Etty Hillesum*