



5 STEPS TO EFFICIENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

1. Calm your mind
2. Regular physical activity
3. Healthy sleep routine
4. Laugh, try something new
5. Relax

Stress is a normal human reaction to different kinds of stressors from the environment. Stress affects our physical sensations, thought patterns, feelings, and behavior. Often, **we don't recognize it soon enough**, so it's essential to bring awareness to the symptoms of stress.

Stress affects us all; no one can hide. Statistical data shows that every 3rd person suffers from excessive stress in the workplace. With the rising job demands, a lack of quality free time, and everyday worries, stress became one of the leading health problems in the world. Considering our modern lifestyle, we can't eradicate stress completely. However, we can learn how to live with it and reduce its adverse effects.

It's crucial to develop effective strategies to manage acute stressful situations to prevent chronic stress that can negatively influence our health, well-being, and performance in the long term. But if we want to manage stress more efficiently, we first have to recognize it.

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS:

Physical symptoms:	Emotional symptoms:	Behavioral symptoms:
Heart racing	Desparation	Forgetfulness
Rapid heartbeat	Constant worrying	Uncertainty
Dry mouth, difficulty swallowing	Irritation	Being reactive
Faster and shallow breathing	Dissatisfaction	Impatience
Digestive problems	Boredom	Lack of self care
General muscle tension	Inability to focus	Confusion
Tension in neck and shoulders	Emotional overload	Ineffectiveness
Tense muscles	Low self-esteem	Always in a hurry
Sweaty hands	Anxiety	Isolating from others
Body heat waves	Depression	Sleep disorders
Chest pain	Hopelessness	Being pessimistic
Upset stomach/stomach pain	Anger	Indecisiveness



CALM YOUR MIND

Symptoms of stress show through our behavior – from impatience, indecisiveness to uncertainty, irritability, anger, and even aggression. Think about how irritable you are when you are under stress. In addition to changes in behavior, **stress also negatively influences our efficiency and performance**. We are also often forgetful, in a constant hurry which leads to even greater pressure. In many cases, stress can also lead to a lack of self-interest and self-care, damaging our overall health and relationships. Often we convince ourselves we can put our relationships and self-care routines on hold to get through the stressful periods.

If we perceive stress as unfavorable, **this shows negative emotions, such as dissatisfaction, sadness, concern, feeling overwhelmed, and tired**. Typically, when stressed out, we're **pessimistic or have negative thoughts**. This can lead to low self-esteem, destructive thought patterns, and lower self-reliance. Stress can also impair our rational thinking, which sometimes causes us to do things we usually think are inefficient or absurd.

Since stress leads to negative thought patterns and impairs rational thinking, more attention should be devoted to that.



ONE NEGATIVE THOUGHT LEADS TO OTHER

Constant doubts and negative thoughts can quickly cause a **vicious circle of negative thinking** when one negative thought creates another, and our mind is more like a bee house. This is why it is essential to **calm down our minds and transform our thoughts**.

RECOGNIZE THOUGHTS

Recognizing our thoughts is the hardest part of stress management. We can write down a negative thought every time it passes through our minds to make it easier. Once we recognize those negative thoughts, we have to stop them and transform them into more positive and realistic ones. We cannot always be positive, but it's important to stay realistic.

CALM DOWN INTENSE FEELINGS

Sometimes, when we feel intense emotions, it's hard to transform negative thoughts, doubts, and concerns because they seem accurate and appropriate. In this case, it's better to focus on handling the intense emotions or taking a more neutral position. Ask yourself, what would you advise your friend if he was in the same situation. Think about all the different explanations of the problem you may have.

Changing your thoughts is a kind of exercise – the more you'll work on changing negative monologue, the better you'll become at it. Nothing is easy at first, but with time and practice, it becomes easier. Stay persistent in recognizing, stopping, and transforming negative thoughts into positive ones. This way, you'll be more optimistic, self-confident, motivated, and consequently, your well-being and performance will improve. Moreover, when controlling our thought patterns, we also decrease our stress levels.



REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

One of the most efficient ways to reduce stress and improve our well-being is regular and moderate **physical activity**.

Being in good shape greatly helps with **stress management**. People who are in good condition are also happier and more motivated as well as more intellectually active. Regular and moderate physical activity also improves our immune system, reduces muscle tension and symptoms of stress. Physical activity also enhances our **self-esteem** and **boosts our energy levels**.



200 minutes per week!



CHOOSE AN ACTIVITY YOU LIKE

If we want to manage stress successfully, it's essential to choose an activity that doesn't cause us additional stress – either because of the difficulty of the exercise itself or financial pressure. Recreational sports such as hiking, jogging, swimming, or cycling are very beneficial.

BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF SOCIETY

Keeping **a good company** is also an essential factor of great stress management. **Exercise with your friends** or go to a **yoga class** – either way, good company benefits our motivation for a regular and effective workout and reduces stress. If until now you've been more or less physically inactive, go slowly. Start with walks in nature, cycling with family & friends, or hiking on the nearest hill.

DON'T EXAGGERATE

Don't exaggerate with the intensity of your workout because you can do just the opposite of what you want. Your **stress levels can increase**, and in this case, you're not doing yourself a favor. It's important to enjoy the movement because the main reason is to relax and have fun, not set unrealistic goals, and compete.

MAKE SURE YOU EXERCISE REGULARLY

Don't forget – **only regular physical activity can help and bring results**. To stay fit and reduce stress in our lives, it is recommended to be physically active for at least **200 minutes per week**.



HEALTHY SLEEP ROUTINE

A healthy sleep routine is crucial for our well-being and overall health. **When we sleep, our brain rest, and our body & muscles can regenerate.** There are many causes of sleep issues, and one of the most common is stress. Think about it, when you're lying in your bed, your head full of concerns and thoughts, you're becoming more and more anxious and tired but can't seem to fall asleep. No wonder, in this case, your body is still active, and your worried mind is not doing you any favor. When overthinking in your bed, we don't give our body and mind a chance to rest. In the long term, this can result in tiredness, irritability, tension, and increased stress. We can quickly find ourselves in a vicious circle when we don't sleep because of the stress, which increases stress and causes us to fall asleep harder or sleep worse.

Sometimes it's not about **bad sleep**; it's also about **a lack of sleep**. We tend to work longer and sleep less because we think this will make us more successful. In reality, a lack of sleep can cause severe health conditions and increased stress, making us less productive and more prone to making mistakes.

Take time to sleep!



TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP:

CREATE A SLEEP ROUTINE

Create a **sleep routine** that benefits you. Go to bed **every day at approximately the same time and wake up each day at the same time**. Don't sleep in on the weekends. This will help balance your biorhythm; it will help you fall asleep faster, sleep better and get proper rest. For optimal functioning, you need **6-8 hours of sleep**. If you feel like you're tired or stressed out, you can sleep even longer.

RELAX BEFORE GOING TO BED

Relaxing your mind and body before bedtime is important to help you fall asleep. You can try any **relaxation techniques available on our 24alife mobile app**, read a book or have a warm relaxing bath.

DECREASE THE CONSUMPTION OF CAFFEINE, NICOTINE OR ALCOHOL BEFORE SLEEP

Don't go to bed hungry or too full; **avoid eating a few hours before sleeping**. Decrease the consumption of **caffeine, alcohol, or nicotine** because they will keep decreasing your sleep quality.

MAKE A TO-DO LIST

To avoid worrying about what you have to do the next day, put all the thoughts and possible **tasks on a to-do list**. This way, you'll make sure you don't forget something as well as helping your body and mind relax and rest peacefully.



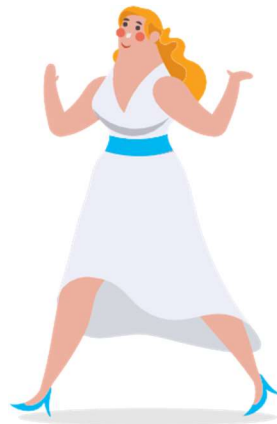
LAUGH, DO WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY, TRY SOMETHING NEW

When we are stressed out, we often forget about things that make us happy. On the other hand, those are the activities that will help us fight the negative consequences of stress. It's also common to think you're running out of time to accomplish all the tasks, and because we want to get our work finished, we don't take enough time for ourselves. We tend to sleep less, stop exercising, spend quality time with friends & family, and even eat a healthy meal. We often don't realize that those are the things that matter when it comes to fighting stress.

DO WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY, TRY SOMETHING NEW

Take time for things you love to do or haven't done in a long time. Even though it may be hard to let go at first, you'll **slowly start to enjoy them and move away from all the stress**. You can **also try something new**, something you've never done before. The most beneficial strategy to manage stress is also the most enjoyable one. When we start to enjoy things we do, we increase the chance that those habits stay with us long term.

12 HABITS OF HIGHLY HEALTHY PEOPLE.



If you didn't yet start to have fun, now is a perfect time! »Try something new« is also one of the 12 habits of highly healthy people. **How to develop those 12 habits?** Check out our program on the 24alife mobile app.

LAUGH, AND THE WORLD WILL LAUGH WITH YOU

Having a good laugh has many positive benefits for our health and well-being. It improves our breathing, immune system, and our performance. When laughing, **our stress levels decrease, and we are more relaxed.** Laughter is one of the best stress management strategies because it makes us more present to experience joy. Laughter not only helps with stress but also decreases our risk for depression and anxiety. It is also one of the 12 habits of highly healthy people.

SPEND TIME WITH YOUR CLOSED ONES

Social and emotional support benefits us all. **A good talk with our partner, friend, or another family member can really help.** When we are under stress, we tend to think irrationally, and we sometimes don't seem to find the right solution. When talking with a person we trust, we can expand our perspective and find the right solutions for the issues we're experiencing.



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RELAX

We often use different **relaxation techniques to manage tension and anxiety**, which are common consequences of stress. Stress activates our sympathetic nervous system to react, but we also have to make sure to put it to rest. That's what we can accomplish with relaxation strategies.

Breathing techniques are the most common way to release tension and relax. By focusing on our breathing, we relax our mind and body. Breathing techniques are efficient because we can use them in every stressful situation and when we feel anxious or tense.

For optimal functioning, we need energy which is only possible with adequate oxygen levels. A lack of oxygen levels can cause tiredness, inability to concentrate, sadness, or depressive mood.

BREATHING TECHNIQUES

An adequate oxygen level in our blood boosts our energy which makes us feel fresher and stronger.

In stressful situations, our breathing becomes more shallow, faster, and less efficient. The essential thing about breathing techniques is that we learn how to relax & we release any tension in our body which is a result of stress.

LEARN HOW TO PRACTICE BREATHING EXERCISES

One of the easiest breathing exercises is **rhythmical breathing**, where we focus on inhaling and exhaling. First, we concentrate on breathing. It's essential to breathing in rhythm – inhale and exhale should take the same amount of time. There are many different rhythms, with the most common ones being 3-1-3 and 4-2-4. We breathe in the same rhythm as long as we need to feel relaxed completely.

RHYTHM 3-1-3



Inhale-two-three
(slow deep breath)



One (hold your
breath)



Exhale- two- three
(exhale slowly)

OTHER RELAXATION ACTIVITIES

Besides different relaxation exercises, we can't forget about **everyday activities** that are also relaxing. Those activities include taking a bath, spending time in a sauna, afternoon nap, reading a book, etc. Sometimes the most relaxing thing we can do is spend some time with friends or do simple things we love. You can learn more about different relaxation techniques in the 24alife app, where relaxation exercises are guided.

Research shows that diseases related to stress are the cause of more than half of doctor visits. With »5 steps to manage stress, « you can successfully limit it.