

STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The following are tips on how to maintain a healthier lifestyle and how to cope with the stress of everyday living.

1. Structure each day to include a minimum of 20 minutes of aerobic exercise.
2. Eat well-balanced meals, more whole grains, nuts, fruits, and vegetables. Substitute fruits for desserts.
3. Avoid caffeine. It can speed up your system for up to 20 hours and may aggravate anxiety, insomnia, nervousness, and trembling.
4. Reduce intake of refined sugars. Excess sugars cause frequent fluctuation in blood glucose levels, adding stress to the body's physiological functioning.
5. Reduce intake of alcohol and drugs. These substances may add to headaches and swelling, decrease coping mechanisms, and add to depression.
6. Get at least 7 hours of sleep nightly.
7. Spend time each day with at least one relaxation technique: imagery, daydreaming, prayer, yoga, or meditation.
8. Take a warm bath or shower.
9. Go for a walk.
10. Get in touch! Hug someone, hold hands, or stroke a pet. Physical contact is a great way to reduce stress.
11. BREATHE slowly and deeply, and tell yourself "I am O.K. I can manage this."

Why is routine exercise good time and stress management?

"But I don't have time to exercise regularly," you shout in frustration.

"Well," I say "the President of the United States exercises regularly. Are you busier than he is? Besides, let's look at this logically."

When people exercise routinely, they have more time than when they don't...

"How?" you ask skeptically.

This is what they say:

1. The quality of their sleep improved so they need less sleep. This adds time to their day.
2. They have more energy and get things done more quickly. This adds time and a sense of accomplishment to their day.
3. They are more focused with their work and are more efficient, so they get more done in less time. This adds time to their day and a sense of competence.
4. Exercise improves general health, so they get sick less often. This adds time and good health to their week.
5. The social effect of exercising with a friend(s) is great tonic for the soul. This adds fun and good things to their day.
6. They feel more relaxed and less stressed. This adds peace to their day.
7. Studies show exercise helps to improve depression and decrease anxiety. This adds happiness and a stronger feeling of control to their day.

After all, we all have exactly the same amount of time given to us each day (1,440 minutes).

WHAT'S DIFFERENT IS HOW WE SPEND IT!!