

Tips for Managing and Reducing Stress

Stress happens. We all get stressed when work piles up, or friends disappoint us, or parents and teachers put on pressure. The thing is to recognize it and take care of yourself when it happens.

What does stress feel like?

Stress can feel like tension in your muscles, or an upset stomach. It can cause a headache, or exhaustion. It can definitely make you feel angry or sad. Some people explode when stressed. Others hold it in, which can cause depression.

So what do I do with all this stress?

1. Recognize it. Are you feeling unusually tired or angry or sad? Do your muscles ache for no reason? Is your stomach upset, but you're not sick? Then you're probably stressed.
2. Make time to chill. Schedule it. After school, or after sports. Before homework.
3. During that chill time, call a trusted friend who's a good listener. Or call someone else who has been helpful to you, maybe an aunt or uncle, a family friend, or a coach.
4. Listen to your favorite relaxing music.
5. Watch a TV show you used to watch when you were younger.
6. Take a break from your phone.
7. Practice mindfulness meditation. Breathe slowly. Try calm.com.
8. Take a shower, or a long bath.
9. Catch up on your sleep.
10. Eat more protein – most of us eat way too many carbs, which don't sustain energy.
11. Find a workout you like. Try Zumba.
12. Do something completely different – pick up a new interest, check clubs at Whitman or start your own.
13. Do something for someone else. It will take your mind off your problem.
14. Write in a journal. It helps to get it down on paper.
15. Take things one at a time. Break down your homework into 30-minute sections. Take 10-minute breaks to check your phone. Homework will go a lot faster and easier.
16. Try yoga. Restorative yoga is very relaxing, perfect before going to sleep.

What if my stress is overwhelming?

If you're feeling overwhelmed, anxious or scared, tell a friend. Tell your counselor, a favorite teacher, or another trusted adult who can help you get the support you need. You are not alone! Everyone has been through hard times. Things do get better with time and with support.

Sources

Fostering Resilience

http://www.fosteringresilience.com/stress_management_plan.php

Palo Alto Medical Foundation Teen Life Stress

<http://www.pamf.org/teen/life/stress/managestress.html>