

ARE YOU STRESSED? YOU CAN..... (BEAT IT)

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Introduction:

Stress is slowly becoming a necessary evil of the modern world; where it is nearly impossible to avoid its occurrence. Stress is to be a complex and dynamic process of interactions between a person and his life. All fears in the human mind arise from either subconscious or conscious state. Stress is a sum-total of the happenings in the various elements of our environment. It is the way we react physically, emotionally and mentally to the different conditions, changes and the demands of life. **Hans Seyle**, one of the founding fathers of stress research has stated “Stress is not necessarily something bad—it all depends on how you take it. The stress of exhilarating, creative, successful work is beneficial while that of failure, humiliation or infection is detrimental”. Managing stress is key to your health. And it isn't so very difficult to do.

Are you stressed?

If you suffer from stress and feel like no one understands you, know that this is perfectly normal. The reason for that lies in the fact that there are many different kinds of causes of stress that are unique and associated with your current life's situation. What is stressful to you may not be for others, so they may not understand what you are going through. What causes stress also depends on your personality and the way you react to specific life situations or major life changes. For example, may be riding on the train every day to work for you is stressful, while others enjoy the ride as they listen to music on their mp3. May be driving the car is entertaining for you, but for someone else (like novice driver) can be real stressful experience. See the difference? By understanding the causes of stress you can find the solution for suitable stress reduction.

Stress has been associated with variety of symptoms some of which are given below. ‘Look at the list of important symptoms and see whether you exhibit one or more of them:

The likely symptoms of Stress:

- Increased heart palpitations
- High blood pressure tendencies
- Sweaty palms
- Profuse sweating
- Occasional clenching of first, jaws or muscles.
- Chronic headache
- Constipation
- Hesitating to urinate/ frequent urination
- Trembling
- Developing speech problems
- Disturbed sleep

- The constant feeling of tiredness
- Shallow breathing
- Drying of mouth or throat
- Irritability
- Excessively aggressive behavior or attitude
- Depression
- Restlessness
- Lack of initiative
- Losing interest
- A constant feeling of wanting to cry
- Jealousy
- Lack of patience

Objectives of the Study

- To identify causes of stress
- To understand how it affects us
- To explore different options for minimizing or dealing with stress

How does stress affect health?



The body's autonomic nervous system has a built-in stress response that causes physiological changes to allow the body to combat stressful situations. This stress response, also known as the "fight or flight response," is activated in case of an emergency. However, this response can become chronically activated during prolonged periods of stress, which can cause wear and tear on the body -- both physical and emotional.

Stress that continues without relief can lead to a condition called distress -- a negative stress reaction. Distress can disturb the body's internal balance or equilibrium, leading to physical symptoms such as headaches, an upset stomach, elevated blood pressure, chest pain, sexual dysfunction, and problems sleeping. Emotional problems can also result from distress. These problems include depression, panic attacks, or other forms of anxiety and worry. Research suggests that stress also can bring on or worsen certain symptoms or diseases. Stress is linked to six of the leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide.

Stress also becomes harmful when people engage in the compulsive use of substances or behaviors to try to relieve their stress. These substances or behaviors may include food, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, gambling, sex, shopping, and the Internet. Rather than relieving the stress and returning the body to a relaxed state, these substances and compulsive behaviors tend to keep the body in a stressed state causing more problems. The distressed person becomes trapped in a vicious circle.

Table shows Physical and Emotional Disturbances in Men and Women

Ailment	Men	Women
Worrying	70.8%	76.4%
Fatigue	58.4%	71.9%
Headaches	52.2%	55.1%
Anger	51.3%	53.9%
Backaches	50.4%	55.1%
Stiffness in the shoulders and back	45.1%	57.3%

Source: Balancing Act/Times Life/The Times of India/August7, 2005.

Stress Management in the Workplace:

Why are you working?

Work is the exertion of undertaking mental or physical activity for a purpose or out of necessity. It is also defined as proceeding along a path towards a goal. Most workplace stress starts when we lose sight of the necessity of our work, the purpose of our job, and/or our goals. You can reduce much of your stress and regain your perspective by redefining why you are working.



Stress is a common and costly problem in the workplace, leaving few workers untouched.

1. A recent survey, published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, noted that for those working 12 hours a day, there was a 37% increase in risk of illness and injury in comparison to those who work fewer hours.
2. A study done by Northwestern National Life, reports that one-fourth of employees view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives.
3. A St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Co. study concluded that problems at work are more strongly associated with health complaints than any other life stressor, even financial or family problems.

Stress in the workplace frequently hits you with a double whammy of two-way pressures that come from a combination of both internal and external stressors. Stress results in decreased job satisfaction, reduced production, and increased conflicts, which all lead to – you guessed it – more stress! When you ignore stress signals, you are more liable to become ill or fatigued and to experience injury. As an employee, there are several steps you can take to preserve your health by reducing workplace stress.

External Stressors

Frequently employees tend to ignore problems created by external stressors because they feel that the problems are trivial, petty, or don't (or won't) merit the attention of the employer. However, often these problems have an easy solution. For instance, stress can be caused by something that seems as trivial as an incorrectly positioned chair or computer screen. Other examples of external stressors include loud or continuous noise, nosy or noisy co-workers, demanding bosses, and complaining customers. If external stressors are causing problems for you, the worst thing you can do is ignore them. Identifying and examine external stressors for possible solutions. Even if all of them aren't resolved, any positive change you will result in a happier, healthier you.

Internal Stressors

Internal stressors are not workplace problems by perceptions. Some examples are feelings of dissatisfaction, irritability, inability, and the feeling that your efforts aren't properly rewarded or recognized. One helpful way to reduce internal stress is to remember what you liked about your job when you started it. Consider what has changed as well as what needs to change for you to be satisfied in your position again.

Change your focus

You may not be able to cut back on hours at work, but you can work to live and not live to work. Because of the number of hours many employees work per week, the job can easily become all-encompassing. We wake and get ready for work, drive to work, spend eight or more hours at work, and finally drive home from work. As you can see, although we aren't getting paid, we are "at work" for much longer than eight hours a day! Learning to keep work in focus during work hours and life in focus after hours will take you a long way towards managing workplace stress.

1. School yourself to wake and get ready, not for work, but for your day.

2. On the drive to work, listen to music, humor – anything that isn't related to work.
3. Take an alternate route to work. The change in scenery will help you stay alert to the road and keep your mind off the job.
4. Plan your work and work your plan. Devote every paid minute to your job. Deviate from your work plan only when absolutely necessary.
5. Take your allotted breaks. Remember: the opposite of stress is relaxation. Don't work through lunch or coffee breaks. This also means don't think or talk about work during your breaks.
6. Instead of coffee, drink water, juice, or electrolyte infused drinks. Dehydration often is the cause of fatigue. Coffee and soft drinks that contain caffeine may seem to "keep you going", but in reality they add to stress and don't keep your body hydrated.
7. Keep a copy of Stress Management Tips, Stress Reliever Games, and Stress Relieving Exercises nearby and refer to it when you need to get through a stressful occurrence.
8. Just as you plan your work, plan your time away from work. At day's end, leave work behind you and focus on your plans for the evening. Work to live. Relaxation away from work means less stress... and a better day tomorrow!

Stress management techniques:

You ever wondered what are the best stress management techniques that could help every single individual? We think it is those that are easiest to put in practice. We all have the power to be our own stress managers, the techniques and practices are here and they could be managed easy, we just have to know them and utilize them wisely to reduce our stress.

Here are the following stress management techniques to resolve the Stress

- Make sure you have everything ready for the next day. For example decide what will you eat in the morning, who will you call for a talk or pick where are you going tomorrow at night, and have your suitcase ready.
- Don't trust yourself too much and become more organized. Everyone forgets things now and then it is completely natural. Keep a pocket book where you can write down appointments and important to-do things. You will realize how useful is self-organization.
- Prevent "why now!" moments, that can catch you by surprise. Keep a backup of house, food and car suppliers.
- Waiting is normal. Whether on a grocery line, at the post office, waiting is part of life. Don't worry, it will be your turn soon, avoid waiting or being in a rush by going 15 minutes earlier.
- We like this one: Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do today; whatever you want to do today, do it now.
- Get it fixed. If something that is broken is stressing you out, get it fixed! Many people stress out over things that can easily be replaced or fixed.
- Replace coffee, or at least slowly switch to decaf. Try natural drink in the morning, like juice or milk.

- Always say NO! To drugs of course To drugs of course and also to invitations or requests. If you can't help just say no instead of being stressed out. Take some time out for yourself and try to relax.
- Streeeeetch your body, it feels good, and is a natural stress reliever.
- Breathe deeply and slowly, it will help your body to relax. Keep a daily journal, writing down your thoughts and feelings is just as speaking them out loud to public.
- Talk it out, if you know someone you can trust, let them know what you are feeling and what are you are thinking, they might be able to help.
- Walk it out. It will do you good.
- Take a shower or hop into the tub and have a nice bath.

Stress management skills:

Everyone nowadays, suffers from stress at one point in their lives. It is an unnecessary part of modern day living and ignoring it would be the worst thing that you could do. Stress is a person's mental, physical, and emotional response to the rising demands and changes in his life. In management and stress management skills are a phenomenon that most modern-day individuals are already familiar with (and are raving about). There are more and more reports and stories on the success that people have gotten with the aid of stress management. Not too many, though, are familiar with it being a collection of several techniques, principles and skills. These skills are a part of the bigger picture called stress management. Mastering the skills.

- ❖ The first, and probably the most important, of all these stress management skills is positive thinking. Positive thinking helps with stress management and is generally admonished to enhance one's well-being. Negativity can be overcome with this skill and it takes sometime to master it.
- ❖ The most common question is—is your glass half-full or is it half-empty? It is all in your perception or outlook in life. Your attitude toward yourself also counts. You have to make a decision early on whether you are a pessimist or an optimist. There have been studies that proved that being an optimist can greatly affect the quality of life of a person.
- ❖ Self-talk is a smaller portion of positive thinking and, thus, a minor part of stress management skills. Self-talk is the thought stream that everyone has in his mind each minute of the day. These can be made positive or negative. If your thoughts are on the positive side, then you are definitely an optimist. If not, well, it's time to start thinking about positive aspects in your life.
- ❖ Living a healthy lifestyle is yet another aspect of stress management skills. You should be able to build defenses against stress by fortifying your system. Once you master this, you will be able to minimize environmental stress, manage chemical stress, and find better ways of relaxing. (Once you fortify yourself against the ravages of the outside world, you will be able to sleep well ones) would make you realize that life is so beautiful.
- ❖ Anger management is a major part of stress management skills. Taming your tempers and urges to burst out is never easy. That's why there are clinics that can help people manage their angers and all other negative emotions. Timing out and deep breathing skills are a part of this program.

- ❖ Just like any other skill, stress management also needs constant practice. And once you get the hang of it, you will be better able to deal with stress even while living in a stressful world.

Stress at work:

Employers should recognize stress at workplace as serious problem because it reduces productivity, affects employee's well-being and places greater pressure on individual. Stress at workplace is not a new phenomenon but its recognition has vastly increased in recent years and affected companies throughout the globe.

Employers should support stress management at work since it is important factor that helps both employees and managers to reduce their job stress. They should also try to avoid possible stressors and provide relaxing work environment for their staff and themselves. Effective stress management can increase productivity, reduce pressure on employees and improve work performance.

What is stress at work?

We are stressed our whole life but it is only sometimes that stress reaches high levels that negatively affect our functioning. Everyday stress helps us to meet deadlines, increase productivity, arrange meetings with new clients or improve our work motivation in general. This type of stress is normal and allows people to develop new skills, acquire new knowledge, and possibly improve their careers. When individual is constantly stressed and cannot relax the line is crossed and normal stress becomes excessive. This change can trigger emotional and physical responses that are harmful to employees and businesses; therefore it should be avoided if possible.

How does stress affect people at work?

It reduces productivity of the employees, their motivation and team work. Stressed employee will be less communicative and unsusceptible to new tasks. His motivation will be battered and his productivity reduced. Stress at workplace will not only affect his work performance but also his personal life. This can lead to even further reduction of work productivity and can result in quitting the job in the worse case scenario it could even affect the health of people that are seriously stressed. know that key to successful business is healthy and satisfied employees or co-workers.

It is important for managers and staff work hand in hand when approaching stress management. Only cooperation of all involved individuals in company or business can result in proper utilization of stress management techniques for successful stress reduction.

Ways to relieve stress at work

Majority of people suffer from stress at work. Do you feel like you have the same problem? And whether it is continuous problem or a sporadic crisis, these quick stress relief techniques can help

you to get back a sense of inner peace in the middle of a chaotic day. Here is the list of ways to relieve stress at work and if you follow them correctly you will reduce stress easily.

- Organize your day. Find some time each day to deal with unexpected things that need to be dealt with. If you've already succeeded with these things you'll usually find them easier to cope with.
- You can also stop what you are doing for a couple of minutes and really listen to the music. Play the songs which you enjoy the most and let the music flow through your body. It will breathe new life into you.
- If it's the project that you're currently working on that's worrying you so much, try to shift to another task for a while. Even if it's a crucial task, doing something else will give you breathing space and you can come back to it later feeling more relaxed.
- Leave your desk for a few minutes. Removing yourself from your workplace even for some time is one of the most effective things you can do. Be assured you pick a place where you won't be disturbed by as you won't be disturbed by associate.
- For the end of the day plan something rewarding. It will make day easier if you know that you are having a pleasant evening afterwards.

Stress relief games:

As you probably know, one of the best stress relief techniques is relaxation. And one of the easiest relaxation techniques is playing stress relief games. Games are related to fun and humor so one can become easily entertained when playing. This helps our body and our mind to relax and helps us to forget all the things that bother us.

Recently this type of stress reduction became very popular and Flash games are a sure winner when it comes to stress relief. And remember, playing games can be fun and entertaining, but it may be insufficient, so you should also try some other stress management techniques.

Here is a list of selected online games that can help you relieve your stress and become more relaxed. If those games are not enough, you can always try and play desktop stress relief games that are excellent stress reducers.

Recommended stress games:

- Desktop Destroyer:** Destroy your desktop with this amazing game.
- A Day of Slacking:** Eat, drink and avoid work at all costs.
- Club Penguin:** Play games with friends in awesome Penguin Club.
- Stress Relief Paintball:** Can you hit the smiles of your table?
- Sudoku:** Very popular puzzle game for relaxation!
- Table Tennis:** Simple tennis game!

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INSTANT STRESS RELIEF

I think this is one of the most searched topics on the web. Everyone wants to relieve themselves from stress as quickly as possible. Instant stress relief is a dream we all have, a thing we all want to be able to do. There are many [stress relief techniques](#) we can use to have instant stress relief. It's all about making a couple of small changes in our habits and/or life style.

Deep

Breathing

When you practice deep breathing you help slow your heart rate and relax your body, helping us feel calm and in control. With deep breathing we inhale more oxygen that clears our mind and restores our body. Furthermore, if you focus on your breathing you can take your mind of what is causing you stress. Try it!

Laugh

when

you

can

Laughter is natural stress reliever and it can help you quickly reduce your stress. Humor is really everyday opportunity for personal stress relief. We all know that life without a humor can be boring and depressed. So laugh out loud and forget forget your stress.

Walk it Out
One of the best instant stress relief tips I know of. If you feel stressed or irate about something or someone, just go and take a walk around the block or to a park. Any form of recreation and sports can help your stress relief. Do exercises that you like and stress could disappear instantly.

Get Some Carbs
Carbohydrates naturally helps your body release serotonin, a chemical in your brain that has a calming effect for your mind and your body. Try eating cheerios, a little bit of jelly beans, ice popsicles, pretzels and anything else low in fat but avoid protein, it blocks serotonin. Don't go on an eating binge! It only takes a small snack to make it work.

It's ok to Cry
Our body's natural way to relieve itself of stress is through crying. Crying is good for us, afterwards many feel more relieved and stress free. Your tears are how your body disposes of stressful a chemical, that's why you feel more [relaxed after you cry](#).

Talk or Write
Keeping it all inside only makes it worse. Vent out to a friend, someone who will listen and understand. You can also express yourself through writing, keep a journal where you can place all your thoughts and feelings, get the stress out.

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Stress Relief Paintball

Can you hit the smiles of your table?



Sudoku

Very popular puzzle game for relaxation!



Table Tennis

Simple tennis game!



A stress-mapping tool was used to identify organisational ‘hotspots’ or areas of high stress levels. If a ward had 2 or 3 of the indicators a team stress risk assessment using the HSE Indicator Tool was advocated.

Stress mapping tool

Ward/dept	Absence above 7%	Turnover above 7%	Occupational Health course/ing referrals	Discipline and grievances	Violent incidents	Conflict	Organisational Change	Risk
Wd 4 NTGH	X	X	X		X			X
Wd 17 NTGH				X				
Wd 15 WGH								
Emergency case unit	X		X		X		X	X
Critical Case unit								
Estate and facilities	X	X		X	X			X

TEAM STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT: QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY CONCERNS IN EACH OF THE SIX MAIN STRESS CATEGORIES.

SOURCES OF STRESS	QUESTIONS TO ASK	YES/NO
Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel you have just the right amount of work to do (i.e. not too much or not too little) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you had sufficient training to do your job? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any problems with your work environment? 	
Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you able to have some say about how your job is done? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel included in decision making in the team? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel you are using the skills you have got to full effect? 	
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel that you get enough support from your line manager? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel you get enough support from colleagues? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you take the breaks you are entitled to at work? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel you have a healthy work-life balance? 	
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you affected by any conflict in the team? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you subjected to any bullying or harassment at work? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel the team works well together? 	
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you clear about your roles and responsibilities at work? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel that there is any conflict in your role? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you understand others roles in the team? 	
Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you made aware of any changes that are happening at work? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you understand why the change is happening? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you understand the impact on your job of any change? 	

• Do you feel well supported during change at work?

- You can give this questionnaire out as a survey and collate responses, or if your team is small, use it as a guide for asking questions with them in a team meeting. Do a basic frequency count of yes's and no's from your team members responses.
- Conduct team discussions/ focus groups to explore any areas that seem to be higher risk (i.e. more negative than positive responses to the questions). You can also use the HSE stress questionnaire tool for more detailed analysis. Please seek advice from the occupational health department or go to the stress at work website on the intranet.
- When you have completed the stress risk assessment, develop an action plan (attached) with your team to address any areas of concern or high risk and review this on a regular basis.

TEAM STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT FORM – FOR MANAGER TO COMPLETE

Risk assessment for: Dept/Ward/Team
Hospital/Unit.....

Manager..... Date.....

Type of Stressor	Specific causes of workplace stress identified within each category	Existing workplace precautions already in place	Further action to be taken	Who will ensure the action is done? and Review date
Demands				
Control				
Support				
Type of Stressor	Specific causes of workplace stress identified within each category	Existing workplace precautions already in	Further action to be taken	Who will ensure the action is done? and Review date

		place		
Relationships				
Role				
Change				

General signature.....

Manager's

Tips for Reducing Stress

People can learn to manage stress and lead happier, healthier lives. Here are some tips to help you keep stress at bay:

- ❖ Keep a positive attitude.
- ❖ Accept that there are events that you cannot control.
- ❖ Be assertive instead of aggressive. Assert your feelings, opinions, or beliefs instead of becoming angry, defensive, or passive.
- ❖ Learn and practice relaxation techniques; try meditation, yoga, or tai-chi.
- ❖ Exercise regularly. Your body can fight stress better when it is fit.
- ❖ Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- ❖ Learn to manage your time more effectively.
- ❖ Set limits appropriately and say no to requests that would create excessive stress in your life.
- ❖ Make time for hobbies and interests.
- ❖ Get enough rest and sleep. Your body needs time to recover from stressful events.
- ❖ Don't rely on alcohol, drugs, or food to reduce stress. Ease up on caffeine, too.
- ❖ Seek out social support. Spend enough time with those you love.
- ❖ Seek treatment with a psychologist or other mental health professional trained in stress management or biofeedback techniques to learn more healthy ways of dealing with the stress in your life.

What Makes It Burnout? Symptoms You Should Know About

- Does it seem like every day is a bad day?

- Would you characterize most of your life as “stressful”?
- Do you feel like keeping up your commitments is just a waste of energy?
- Do you feel alone in the world?
- Do you find your daily work overwhelming or boring?
- Do you wonder if anything you do makes a difference?
- Are you increasingly cynical about where your life is headed?

No, that short list of symptoms isn't designed to be a depression test for burnouts. However, it should give you some idea of how stress is impacting your mental health. So what can you do if you're starting to feel burnt out? You can prevent the stress of the burnout from turning into deeper depression or mental illness by employing these simple stress management tips.

If you're burnt out already:

1) **You need to slow down.** You've worked too hard and simply adjusting your workload will not stop the burnout. You need to actually take a break—make time to rest and heal. Yes, it's hard to walk away from work commitments. But it's easier than suffering serious depression and mental illness.

2) **Find a friend.** Relationships in your life can restore meaning, hope, and relaxation. Don't let your friends be sucked into the cycle of you burning out; let them be the respite from that stress. Share your feelings with those you love, and let them help you beat the burnout.

3) **Think about what matters.** You're likely to get burned out when you forget the reasons for your life and your work. Don't lose track of your hopes and goals. What is burnout really? It's the state of having lost perspective about what really matters in life. Treat your burnout by taking some time to make sure that your career and commitments are in line with those goals.

As long as you're taking the time to research treatment for burnouts, why don't you take a few minutes to consider the condition of your heart? Why not take a few minutes to talk to God about the pain of burnout?

Stress Management Tips

All stress isn't bad. Stress can initiate change, help us focus on the task at hand, and in some cases even save our lives. Yet, when stress builds up, it can result in the opposites— and cause us to spin our wheels, keep us from concentrating, and cause bodily injury and even loss of life.

The first tip in managing stress is to recognize your stressors. The next step is to put each of them in their place. The following stress management tips, based on some old and some new adages, can help you do just that!

Take a Deep Breath and Count to Ten—

Taking a deep breath or two adds oxygen to your system, which almost instantly helps you relax. In addition, taking a moment to step back can help you maintain your composure, which in the long run, is what you need to work rationally through a stressful situation.

Start with “take a deep breath” and...

1. Count to ten (or more or less as the situation warrants!)
2. Stand up and stretch. Remember relaxation is the opposite of stress.
3. Stand up and smile. Try it! You'll feel better!

4. Take a short walk. If you're at work, take a bathroom break or get a glass of water. Do something that changes your focus. When you come back to the problem, chances are it won't seem nearly as insurmountable.
5. In the book *Gone With the Wind*, Scarlett O'hara says, "I can't think about that right now. If I do, I'll go crazy. I'll think about that tomorrow." Good advice!

Stop and Smell the Roses—

"Things happen" and sometimes "bad things happen to good people". If we let them, stressful events can build up, wall us in, and eventually stop us from enjoying the good things in life.

1. **Take the time.** Too often we put the pleasantries of life on the back burner, telling ourselves we don't "have time" or can't "make time" for them. However, actually, time is the only thing we do completely own. While we can't "make" a day that's longer than 24 hours, each of us starts the day with exactly that amount of time. Take a part of your time to recognize the good things in your life.
2. **Sleep on it.** Every coin has two sides and every issue has both pros and cons. List them both then put the list away and take a second look tomorrow. Sometimes "sleeping on" a situation changes the minuses to pluses.
3. **Every cloud has a silver lining.** After all, rain makes things grow! Ben Franklin found good in a bolt of lightning. Find the good in your stressful situation by listing the negative surges and determining what it will take to make them into positive charges!

Know Your Limitations

Knowing yourself and your limits may be the most important way to manage stress effectively.

1. **Dare to say no.** One more little thing may be the "straw that breaks the camel's back". It's okay to say "No", "I can't", or "Later".
2. **Acquit yourself.** Sometimes events really are out of control and you really are "Not Guilty". Quit blaming yourself.
3. **Be pro-active in finding peace.** Those who unsuccessfully use the crutches of drugs and/or alcohol to alleviate stress often find themselves in a twelve-step program like A.A. where one of the mainstays is the Serenity Prayer:

"God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change; The Courage to change the things I can; and the Wisdom to know the difference."

4. **When you need help, get help.** Even Atlas couldn't bear the weight of the world on his shoulders forever. Whether you need help from kids or spouse in hauling groceries into the house, help from a colleague to solve a work-related problem, or professional help to find the causes of and effectively manage your stress, getting the help you need is in itself a major stress management tip!

Other Tips

- Get a good night's rest.
- Eat healthily.

- Listen to your favorite music.
- Exercise, participate in a sport or engage in fun activity.
- Plan out your time and prioritize.
- Talk to a friend about your problems, don't hold it in.
- Get a massage.
- Take a nap.
- Take a warm bath.
- Read a book or watch TV.

What Are the Warning Signs of Stress?

Chronic stress can wear down the body's natural defenses, leading to a variety of physical symptoms, including:

- Dizziness or a general feeling of "being out of it"
- General aches and pains
- Grinding teeth, clenched jaw
- Headaches
- Indigestion or acid reflux symptoms
- Increase in or loss of appetite
- Muscle tension in neck, face or shoulders
- Problems sleeping
- Racing heart
- Cold and sweaty palms
- Tiredness, exhaustion
- Trembling/shaking
- Weight gain or loss
- Upset stomach, diarrhea
- Sexual difficulties
- Irritability, impatience, forgetfulness

How Can You Manage Your Stress?

