



Central MN Mental Health Center
A time to heal, a place to start.

WELLNESS BULLETIN

AUGUST 2017

Want Less Stress? Try These 6 Tips:

Each of the following tools for realistic stress management will help you with the personal and professional stressors you face during your career. If you can focus on these six, every day, you will see important differences in your energy level, enthusiasm and relationships, and improvements in your work and overall mental and physical health.

Breathe—Stress-related breathing is short, shallow and rapid. Stress-managed breathing is long, deep and slow. Skilled athletes learn to control their breathing while competing and especially just before they perform a specific move. You cannot function effectively if your breathing is out of control. Shallow breathing creates a vicious circle; the shorter your breaths, the more of them you need to take. Without good oxygen control, your body shifts into fight-or-flight mode. Breathe in a methodical cycle: inhale, hold briefly, exhale, hold briefly, inhale, hold, etc. Concentrate on the length of each breath and spending a moment on those transitions between the end of each inhalation and the start of each exhalation.

Relax—This does not mean put your feet up with a drink and watch TV. Using focused relaxation for stress control means finding a minimum of 10 minutes each day, in a safe place, to close your eyes and do one thing: breathe slowly, counting from 100 down to 1 (OK, so that's two things). If you can make this a part of your everyday routine, like brushing your teeth (and, just like for good tartar control, twice a day would be even better), you will actually want to start extending the time.

Exercise—Running a marathon or joining Crossfit is not necessary to get beneficial, stress-relieving exercise. Just walk. Daily. For about 30 minutes. Walking is easier on your joints, burns calories if you move along at a good pace (about 130 steps per minute), and is a great social activity to connect with your spouse or partner, friends, colleagues or your dog. Exercise helps you get better sleep, burns your excess stress energy from the day, and supports your heart and lungs.

7 Foods for Stress Relief

1. Nuts—Stress depletes our B vitamin snacking on nuts helps replenish them.
2. Red Bell Peppers—have double the vitamin C of an orange, diets loaded with vitamin C foods lower cortisol and help people cope.
3. Salmon—To keep your wits about you when life gets hairy, you need omega-3s, especially DHA .
4. Spinach—This leafy-green veggie is rich in stress-busting magnesium.
5. Oatmeal— helps your brain generate the destressing neurotransmitter serotonin.
6. Dark Chocolate—lowers cortisol and fight-or-flight hormone levels.
7. Tea—tea drinkers de-stressed faster and had lower cortisol levels

(Source: <http://www.eatingwell.com>)



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Diet—Out with the bad carbs (diet and regular sodas, candy, bagels, white rice, pasta, fries) and in with the lean proteins, more veggies, complex carbohydrates, fruits, nuts, more water and vitamins. Food is a drug, and it changes your mood for the good or the bad (caffeine, liquor, sugar, fats). Small changes make a big difference over time, like cutting portion sizes, avoiding most fast foods, drinking two glasses of water before each meal, avoiding carbs after dinner and adding more fiber. Your body needs fuel but it needs the right kinds of fuel. What you eat makes a difference in how you think, feel and even how you sleep.

Sleep—We are a sleep-deprived culture. People who say they can get by on four to six hours a night are actually harming themselves. Lack of sleep affects your hormones (which can give you belly fat), judgment, concentration and interactions with people. If you feel tired all the time, resolve to get more and better sleep than you do now. We sleep in 90-minute cycles. If you can adjust when you go to bed so that you wake up at the end of a 90-minute cycle, you'll feel better. Have you ever had only four hours of sleep and felt fairly refreshed?

Have you ever had 10 hours of sleep and felt like a zombie? In the first scenario you woke up at the end of a 90-minute cycle; in the second you woke up in the middle of one. So if you go to bed at 10:30 p.m. and get up at 6:00 a.m., you may feel better than if you go to bed at 10:00 p.m. and get up at 6:00 a.m. Make your bedroom dark, quiet and cool. Don't fight with your spouse or partner in the bedroom. Go to another part of the house. The bedroom should be a place of peace.

Attitude—You can manage your personal and professional stress when you are relentlessly positive. People who see the worst in everyone and in everything are no fun to be around. Not all the world is bad. Those same people who always see their glass (or their checking account) as half-empty rather than half-full bring everyone around them down. Psychologist and stress expert Brian Alman says it best, "Successful people have one foot in the present and the other in the future. Miserable people have one foot in the present and the other stuck in the past." Find the good in the situation you're in. (Source: <https://www.shrm.org>)



Brought to you by your

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"Together, Creating a Healthier Life"