

What can happen if you're over-stressed?

If you become over-stressed it may have unwanted consequences for your health both physical and psychological. Some of these may include:

Psychological/Emotional

- feeling hostile, angry, or irritable
- feeling anxious
- avoiding other people
- crying
- moodiness, feeling frustrated with things that normally don't bother you
- low self-esteem or lack of confidence
- anxiety attacks
- depression or sadness

Physical

- upset stomach, diarrhea, or indigestion
- headache
- backache
- inability to sleep
- eating too much or too little
- raised heart-rate
- smoking

If you are experiencing any of these problems you may want to talk to your local doctor, youth worker or school counselor.

Managing Stress

It may not be possible to remove the stress from your life, however managing your stress may help you to get things done. Below are some ideas for managing stress:

Go for a walk or run- Exercising can be a good way of relieving stress. It helps to get rid of all that pent up energy and can leave you feeling much calmer. Any exercise can be good. You may want to go and kick a footy with friends or head to the gym.

Hang out with friends - If you are feeling stressed you may need to take your mind off things for a while. Hanging out with friends is one way of doing that. It may be that similar things that stress you out, also stress your friends out and so talking about your problems with them may be helpful.

Taking some deep breaths - Deep breathing can help to relax the body and hence calm you down. Taking deep breaths before an exam, game, job interview or before going on stage may help to calm you down and focus on what it is you are about to do.

Setting realistic goals - Becoming over-stressed may make it harder to keep things in perspective. Setting realistic goals (both short-term and longer term) and priorities and time management may be useful ways of managing your stress.

Have multiple options to achieve your goals - There is never just one way to achieve something. It's important not to put all your eggs into one basket - investigate and plan other ways to get to where you want to go, whether it's a university degree, job or holiday.

Managing Stress



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How does stress affect the body?

The human body responds to events that provoke stress (stressors) by activating the nervous system and specific hormones. The hypothalamus signals the adrenal glands to produce more of the hormones adrenaline and cortisol and release them into the bloodstream. These hormones speed up heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure and metabolism. The physical changes prepare you to react quickly and effectively to handle the pressure of the moment.

This natural reaction is known as the stress response. Working properly, the body's stress response improves your ability to perform well under pressure.



What causes over-stress?

Stress affects everybody in a different way. What causes one person to become over-stressed may not have the same affect on someone else.

Many things may cause people to become over-stressed, including:

- exams
 - problems at school or work
 - sexual, physical or emotional abuse
 - relationships
 - new responsibilities
 - moving to a new place
 - a traumatic event - such as the death of a loved one
 - new or chronic illness or disability
 - peer pressure, being bullied
- unrealistic expectations placed on you by yourself, friend, family or culture.



25 Winning Stress Management Strategies:

1. Set small goals
2. Do your best on everything
3. Learn to laugh under pressure
4. Take time to be organized
5. Avoid leaving loose ends
6. Prioritize responsibilities
7. Handle multiple tasks efficiently
8. Enjoy your commute
9. Plan ahead
10. Identify your problems
11. Examine your motives
12. Be ready for challenges
13. Avoid procrastination
14. Find your productive time
15. Let music soothe your worries
16. Make time for fun
17. Escape stress with relaxation
18. Discover a new perspective
19. Defeat anxieties by facing them
20. Take inventory of your stressors
21. Consider every option
22. Attain a healthy outlook
23. Increase your job enthusiasm
24. Look at the positive side of things
25. Keep your chin up