

MANAGING STRESS OVER A LIFETIME

EAP Article Series

Taking care of yourself by using a few simple strategies will provide lasting benefits in regard to managing your stress and staying in good health.

1. Watch what you eat. Give your body proper nutrients and vitamins every day. Eliminate the majority of unnecessary, unhealthy calories. Watch the caffeine and sugar intake — too much will have you on a roller coaster.
2. Exercise every day. If this feels like work, then reframe it in your mind to simply getting up and moving around often. Your muscles and bones will stay stronger and more flexible, your circulation will improve, and you will even be able to think more clearly. The benefits are enormous.
3. Get proper rest. Know how much sleep you require to function at your best. Then go back to #1 and #2 and be sure you aren't losing sleep due to too much caffeine or not enough exercise.

Other tips and ideas to consider for a less stressful, and more enjoyable life:

- Work on time management and being organized. If you tend to lose track of time or things, getting this area of your life in order may be a huge stress reliever. Finding the right tools and resources will make this easier. Using calendars or day planners, making lists, filing papers, storing items in the same place (like keys, glasses) will save you much time and grief.

- Spend time managing your finances. Know your numbers. Keep track of your balances. Spending even a small amount of time on this each week will save you money in the long run and spare you from many headaches.
- Continue to do the things in your life that bring you enjoyment. Whether it is engaging in a hobby or sport, listening to music, reading, socializing with friends — if it is something you truly enjoy, be sure you make time for it and do it routinely. So many times we put these things at the bottom of our priorities. Having fun in life should be a major priority. If you haven't done anything fun for a long time, make a plan to start back up today. If you can't think of anything to get involved in, try something new or take a class. The possibilities are endless.
- Reach out to others. Whether you need support from them or you have support to offer, keeping in touch with people and connecting on a routine basis is extremely powerful.
- Find meaning and purpose in life. For example, taking time to explore your spirituality can help you stay focused on what is important, and provide you comfort when you most need it. Take inventory of all the things you're grateful for, the quantity and quality of the items on your list may surprise you.
- Remember to keep perspective. Everything in life is temporary and will eventually pass — even the worst of days. Look for the humor in difficult situations and look for those "blessings in disguise." Every cloud has a silver lining.

For additional resources and assistance, visit MutualofOmaha.com/eap or call an Employee Assistance Program professional at 1-800-316-2796.

