



Happy Labor Day Weekend!

With the summer coming to a close and fall shortly approaching, most of us will be going through some changes. Schedule changes (kids going back to school), work changes (those with seasonal businesses, teachers going back to work), weather changes and daylight savings (not my favorite when it gets darker earlier).

Whether the above is good or bad in your viewpoint, it still requires a change. And changes bring about **STRESS**.

The actual definition of stress is any change in your environment that requires your body to react and adjust in response. And your body reacts to these changes with physical, mental, and emotional responses.

We all know that stress is a normal part of life. Some forget that even good stress (getting a job promotion, getting married, having kids, etc....) still has an effect on our bodies.

The bad stress can lead to physical symptoms including headaches, upset stomach, elevated blood pressure, chest pain, and problems sleeping.

Did you know that 75% - 90% of all doctor's office visits are for stress-related ailments and complaints?

Or that 43% of all adults suffer adverse health effects from stress?

So what can you do to not be part of these statistics?

I always tell my clients that are stressed that it's how you **MANAGE** your stress that matters most. Some are better than others at it. If your coping methods aren't helping you achieve greater emotional and physical well-being, it's time to find healthier ones.

Here are 7 tips you could apply now to help you manage stress:

1. **Exercise regularly** ☺ nothing beats aerobic exercise for releasing pent-up stress and tension. Period. The research backs this up. Working out regularly is one of the best ways to relax your body and mind. Plus, exercise will improve your mood. But you have to do it often for it to pay off.

So how much should you exercise every week?

- **Good:** At the very least, 3 to 5 times for 30 minutes
- **Better:** 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderately intense exercise like brisk walks
- **Best:** Add 75 minutes of a vigorous exercise like swimming laps, jogging, or other sports that gets your heart rate up

2. **Breathe In!** Take some deep breaths! Experts agree—deep breathing is one of the best stress-relieving techniques out there. When stressed we're naturally prone to start taking shallow breaths, which actually increases feelings of tension. Take a minute and breathe deeply.
3. Eat a healthy diet. Well-nourished bodies handle stress better. Start your day right with breakfast, and keep your energy up and your mind clear with nutritious meals throughout the day. Your meals should be full of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and lean protein for energy. And do your best NOT to skip any. Skipping can mess with your blood sugar and put you in a bad mood, which can actually increase your stress.
4. Reduce caffeine and sugar. The temporary energy boost that caffeine and sugar provide can also give you the jitters. Reduce coffee, sodas and sugary snacks in your diet and you'll feel more relaxed and less stressed.
5. Avoid alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. Self-medicating may provide an easy escape from stress, but the relief is only temporary and usually makes the situation causing the stress worse.
6. Relax your muscles. When you're stressed, your muscles get tense. You can help loosen them up on your own and refresh your body by stretching, enjoying a massage, or taking a hot bath or shower.
7. Get enough sleep. Adequate sleep fuels your mind as well as your body. Fatigue increases your stress levels and decreases your ability to think clearly.