

“I need to deal with my stress better. What can I do?”

Stress is a part of life—and it’s not all bad.



When we need to, our reaction to stress, the fight-or-flight response, allows us to do some amazing things. Most of the time, however, the way we respond to stress does not really help us. We need to find ways to relax. Not all stress is bad. “Good” sources of stress, like winning the lottery, usually don’t harm us. It’s the “bad” stress—such as losing your job or getting a divorce—that can cause negative responses like loss of sleep, upset stomach, high blood pressure and increased headaches.

Identify the things that make you feel stressed on a regular basis.

Is there anything you can eliminate?

- Sometimes we can walk away from some of our stressors. We often think we have to deal with certain problems just because we always have.
- Although we have to deal with our other stressors, we can find ways to minimize the negative effects they have on us.

Ways to minimize stress and its effects:

- Get involved in another activity.
- Talk to a friend.
- Do something fun.
- Do some deep breathing exercises.
- Take a hot bath or shower.
- Sit down and enjoy a hobby or craft.
- Listen to music.
- Play with your children or a pet.
- Eat a healthy diet, including fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Limit sugar, fat and caffeine.

Relax. Spend some time each day doing things you enjoy:

- Laugh.
- Talk to friends.
- Meditate.
- Get some exercise.
- Go for a walk.
- Put your feet up and imagine yourself on your ideal vacation!

What other healthy ideas do you have for managing stress? Make a personal list of stressors—and solutions—and think about how you can do some problem-solving of your own.

To learn more about stress, go to Fallon Health’s website, fallonhealth.org.
From the home page click **Healthwise® Knowledgebase** under **Quick links**.

