



Are Life Stressors Eroding Your Health?

Introduction

Stress is a normal part of everyday life. It doesn't result from specific life events. It's your personal response to certain situations that produces stress. That's why an event that you find stressful may not affect someone else. Living with too much stress over a period of time has a negative impact on our health. Signs vary from person to person, with some of the more common ones being physical - headache, insomnia, stomach upset. Stress can also cause psychological changes like irritability and increased worrying. Some people notice changes in their behaviour, feeling less like socializing or having altered eating habits. These are all indicators of stress and sometimes they are so gradual that we don't recognize them.

Tip of the day

Get back to basics when under stress.

Many of us are prone to skip healthy behaviors when feeling stressed, because it seems like other things are more important. However, skipping meals, sleeping less and avoiding exercise makes us less effective in managing stressors

Take action

10 ways to stress less:

1. Identify stressors

Start learning to manage stress by identifying what's causing it. It may be external factors, like work or family, or internal factors like worrying or unrealistic expectations. You may not be able to avoid them all, but you will know what's causing your symptoms and that may make you feel more in control.

2. Develop an action plan

Once you have identified your stressors and accepted they exist, it's time to address them. Some are under your control and some aren't; know the difference and concentrate on those you can change. Try these steps; simplify your life, plan your day, get organized and exercise.

3. Practice tolerance

Learn tolerance of yourself and of situations over which you have no control. Learn to understand and accept that changes are constant and you will always experience a certain degree of stress, and that this is normal.

4. Learn to manage anger

Take time to work out what sets you off so you can plan ahead. Know your warning signs and pay attention to them. Look for creative ways to release your emotional energy and cool down before addressing the cause of your anger.

5. Practice positive thinking

Positive self-talk is an effective way to cope with stress. Our automatic thoughts may be based on logic and reason or misconceptions. The goal of positive self-talk is to identify and challenge the misconceptions. A positive, hopeful attitude can help manage stress. It is simple to learn positive self-talk, but it takes time and practice to regularly stop and evaluate your thinking and learn to put a positive spin on your negative thoughts.

6. Take care of yourself

A healthy body promotes good mental health. Get enough sleep, keep physically active and eat well.

7. Enjoy a good laugh

Laughter helps reduce tension. It's healthy to spend time with people who have a positive outlook, take themselves lightly and have a sense of humor. Look for something to laugh about, it can't hurt!

8. Learn to relax

True relaxation is positive and satisfying. Seek out activities that give you pleasure and try to devote 30 minutes to these activities every day.

9. Get professional help

You don't need to handle all of your problems alone! Seeking outside help is not a sign of weakness. It takes strength to recognize you need help and good judgment to seek it

10. Give yourself time

Practice and patience. These simple reminders can help you be successful. It takes practice to develop new skills and time for benefits to become apparent.

The takeaway

Managing stress is important to our physical and emotional wellbeing and needs to be an active and ongoing process, not just a set of strategies to use in difficult times. Don't wait. Take action!

Learn more

www.cmha.ca

www.orghealthinc.com

For further information on strategies and services to support individual and organizational health, the Employee & Family Assistance professionals at Organizational Health Inc. would be pleased to assist.