

national psychology week

# tips on how to manage everyday stress



Stress is often described as a feeling of being overloaded, wound-up, tense and worried. Learning to handle stress in healthy ways is important. Fortunately, it's easy to learn simple techniques that help.



## Identify warning signs

Signs you are stressed could include tensing your jaw, grinding your teeth, getting headaches, or feeling irritable and short tempered.



## Look after your health

Make sure you are eating healthy food and getting regular exercise. Take time to do activities you find calming or uplifting, such as listening to music, walking or dancing. Avoid using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs to cope.



## Identify triggers

Triggers can raise our stress levels. If you can identify and anticipate them you can practise calming yourself down beforehand, or even find ways to avoid them. Triggers might include late nights, deadlines, seeing particular people, hunger or over-tired children.



## Notice your 'self-talk'

Saying things to yourself such as: "I can't cope", or "I'm too busy", or "I'm so tired", or "It's not fair" is called unhelpful "self-talk". Try more helpful self-talk like "I can cope", or "Calm down", or "Breathe easy".



## Establish routines

Having predictable rhythms and routines in your day, or over a week, such as regular times for exercise and relaxation, meal times, waking and bedtimes, can be calming and reassuring, and can help you to manage your stress.



## Practise relaxation

Make time to practise relaxation. This will help your body and nervous system to settle and readjust. Consider learning a formal relaxation technique such as progressive muscle relaxation, meditation or yoga; or make time to absorb yourself in a relaxing activity such as gardening or listening to music.



## Spend time with people who care

Spending time with and sharing your thoughts and feelings with people you care about and who care about you can help you to feel less stressed. It's important not to 'bottle up' your feelings.

## when to seek professional help

If high levels of stress continue for a long period of time or are interfering with you enjoying a healthy life, consider seeking professional help. A psychologist can help you to identify and change behaviours that are contributing to high stress.

To find an APS psychologist go to: [www.findapsychologist.org.au](http://www.findapsychologist.org.au)