

# VIBE ACTIVITIES

## HEALTHY VIBE – HEALTHY BODY Stress Less page 26

### HEALTHY VIBE

### HEALTHY BODY

# Stress Less

Why staying calm is good for your health

**S**TRESS IS A NATURAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE THAT HELPS US COPE DURING EMERGENCIES. IT MAKES OUR BODIES PRODUCE THE CHEMICALS ADRENALINE AND CORTISOL, WHICH RAISE OUR HEART RATE AND BLOOD PRESSURE AND INCREASE OUR MENTAL FOCUS SO WE CAN PERFORM AT OUR PEAK WHEN WE SENSE THAT WE'RE IN DANGER.

In the short term, stress is a handy thing. The stress response or 'fight-or-flight response' has been a key to survival from the time of our early ancestors. It increases strength, stamina, speed, and enhances your reaction time and focus.

Stress can occur due to many things. Work, school, relationships, financial problems, major life changes, being too busy or family problems, just to name a few.

Everyone experiences a little stress from time to time and this is completely normal. When you become stressed all the time this can become a major problem because the chemicals produced build up and can damage your physical and mental health.

Constant stress lowers the effectiveness of your immune system. The stress hormone cortisol suppresses the white blood cells' ability to work effectively in your immune system. It can act as a signal that stops immune-system cell activity. In small amounts, cortisol stimulates the immune system, but when prolonged it causes havoc. When the immune cells are stimulated for too long they begin to break down, rendering them useless in fighting disease. They begin to destroy healthy tissue instead of pathogens.

When cortisol lingers in our bodies it increases our desire to eat more carbohydrates to compensate for lack of energy. This usually leads to weight gain in the stomach because fat cells in the abdomen are more sensitive to the hormone and are very effective at storing energy. Weight gain in the stomach area is one of the most dangerous places in the body for storing fat. It can lead to many serious health problems, such as diabetes, metabolic syndrome and heart disease.

There are many natural ways that you can deal with stress without going to the doctor.

Deep breathing has proven to be very effective in relieving stress and can be done anywhere. The key is to breathe deeply from the abdomen, rather than shallow breaths from the upper chest. When you take deep breaths you inhale more oxygen. The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath and anxious you will feel. Breathe deeply through your nose and breathe out through your nose. Practising this for a few minutes a day will prove effective in lowering stress.

Any form of exercise is another way to relieve stress, from an intense bike ride to some calming yoga. Exercise releases a flood of endorphins, which make you feel good about yourself and elevate your mood. Exercise is said to be 'meditation in motion' because it distracts you from your worries and also gives you a huge boost in confidence. No matter how fit you are, try a bit of exercise to relieve stress.

You could also try meditation, which is free and can be done almost anywhere – all you need is a quiet, comfortable environment. With practice, meditation can produce a deep state of relaxation and tranquillity.

Sticking to a healthy diet is another key way to keep stress at bay. When constantly stressed, our bodies go into overdrive and use up much more energy than usual. To counteract this, you must eat foods that can give your bodies the healthy nutrients they need. It's common for people to crave foods that are high in carbs when they are stressed, but you must eat the right ones. As well as keeping you healthy, a healthy diet will result in feel-good endorphins, which help relieve stress.

Research suggests that owning an animal can also have health benefits. Pets have an amazing ability to elevate mood, relieve stress and lower blood pressure. They also encourage you to get out and exercise.

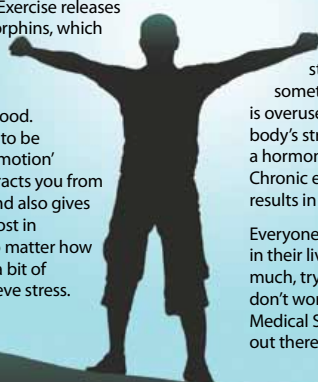
Negative ways to deal with stress are smoking, drinking, over- or under-eating, isolating yourself from friends and family, using pills or drugs, sleeping too much, procrastinating, avoiding problems or spending hours in front of the TV or computer.

When people are stressed, they often think having a cigarette will calm them down, but the opposite is true. Cigarettes contain the drug nicotine, which is a stimulant. It raises the heartbeat and blood pressure and leaves you feeling more uneasy.

Many people also believe that alcohol will relieve stress. In low doses this can sometimes be true, but when alcohol is overused it may actually trigger the body's stress response. Alcohol induces a hormone release, resulting in stress. Chronic exposure to alcohol also results in an increase of adrenaline.

Everyone experiences stress at some point in their lives. If you ever find the stress too much, try these simple techniques. If they don't work, visit your local GP or Aboriginal Medical Service because help is always out there if you need it.

“Everyone experiences a little stress from time to time and this is completely normal. When you become stressed all the time, however, this can become a major problem because the chemicals produced build up and can damage your physical and mental health.”



## How do you deal with stress?

Everyone feels a little on edge from time to time – it’s a normal part of life. However, if you feel tense or anxious a lot of the time, it can cause health problems.

There are some simple ways to decrease your stress levels, but if they don’t work for you, make sure you ask for help.

READ *Stress Less* on page 26

### ACTIVITY 1

#### BUILDING READING SKILLS



- skimming and scanning for information.
- reading headings, text boxes and pictures.
- reading for meaning.
- making connections between the text and your world.

**There are three levels of comprehension questions:**

- Literal**            The answer is located in one sentence in the text.
- Inferred**            You need to make links between sentences and graphics (such as illustrations, maps and tables) and what you already know.
- Applied**            The answer is in your background knowledge, what you already know or feel.

**1** According to the text, what are some causes of stress? (inferred)

- issues at school
- difficult relationships
- money worries
- all of the above



**2** What are some physical signs that show you are feeling stressed? (inferred)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**3** How can these responses be beneficial to us as well as harmful to our health? (inferred)

Benefits of stress responses	Problems with long-term stress responses

**4** What are four natural ways to deal with stress? (inferred)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**5** What are four negative ways to deal with stress? (inferred)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**6** Why do you think these strategies are not helpful? (applied)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# ACTIVITY 2

## LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS - SPELLING

**1** The spelling mistakes in these sentences have been underlined.  
Write the correct spelling for each word in the box.



Stress is a natural phisical response.

It helps us to cope during emergency's.

Stress can raise your blood preshure.

**2** Each sentence has one word that is incorrect.  
Write the correct spelling of the word in the box.

Stress has been the key to survive.

It can stem from finanshal problems.

Difficult family relashonships can cause stress.

**3** Circle the misspelt words from the text and rewrite them correctly.

sistem

experiences

dangerouse

serious

natchural

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## ACTIVITY 3

### COPING STRATEGIES

- 1** People deal with stress in many different ways.  
Read the list of coping strategies below.  
Circle the ones that will help you to overcome unhealthy levels of stress.

talk your worries over with a friend

go for a run

get angry

smoke cigarettes

do some deep breathing

talk to a teacher you trust

take your dog for a walk

blame someone else

eat junk food

avoid your friends

drink alcohol

eat healthy foods

stay in your room playing computer games

volunteer some time to help others



## ACTIVITY 4

### HOW DO YOU COPE WITH STRESS?



- 1** Choose one of the scenarios below and write a paragraph to explain the coping strategies you would use to deal with stress in a positive way.

You have an important text coming up at school tomorrow but you don't feel confident about it.

Your friends have started to spend less time with you.

There is a school camp coming up that you really want to go to, but your family has just had to pay for a new car and can't afford the cost.

**My scenario**

**My coping strategy**

**Remember to:**

- write in full sentences.
- state your arguments clearly.
- give reasons and personal examples for your arguments.
- choose your words carefully to convince a reader of your opinions.
- pay attention to your spelling and punctuation.
- check and edit your writing so that it is clear for a reader.