

How can I better manage stress?

Are you feeling stressed out?

First of all, it is important to know that **STRESS** is a part of life! How **YOU CHOOSE** to deal with your stress is what we want to think about. Some people yell and scream when they are stressed out. Others may hide in their rooms and cry. Some people will eat, smoke or drink when they are under stress. However you choose to deal with your stress... **BE SURE THAT WHAT YOU DO IS REALLY HEALTHY AND HELPFUL!**

A good way to cope is to learn skills to help you relax.

DEEP BREATHING



We will teach you the skill of deep breathing to help you relax. Many times, people take short breaths when they are under stress. This does not give your body the proper amount of oxygen it needs. Remember that smoking also takes away the good oxygen that it needs.

Learning deep breathing exercises makes you feel relaxed by breathing slowly and giving your body more oxygen. This skill takes 3 to 5 minutes to do. It involves both your chest and stomach muscles. While doing this exercise, try to focus on the sound and feel of your breathing.

EXERCISE: DEEP BREATHING

Practice Deep Breathing for the next 3 to 5 minutes.

1. Sit in a chair - arms at sides, feet uncrossed.
2. Note any tension or tightness in your muscles.
3. Put one hand on your chest and your other hand on your stomach.
4. Take a slow, deep breath through your nose. As your lungs fill your stomach should raise first and the chest next.
5. Hold the air in for three seconds.
6. Blow the air out through your mouth, making a whooshing sound.
7. Keep taking long, slow deep breaths in through your nose and letting long slow breaths out through your mouth.
8. Focus on the sound of your breath. Do this for 3 to 5 minutes.

How do you feel after practicing the Deep Breathing exercise?

Was it hard for you to do the exercise? Sometimes people who smoke have a hard time doing this exercise and will begin to cough. You will find that if you quit smoking, it will be easier to do as well as practicing this exercise every day.

Did you know that cigarettes could actually cause you to be tense and ADD to the STRESS in your life?

Smokers believe that when they have a cigarette, it eases the feelings of anxiety or restlessness that they are feeling. As we learned earlier, these same feelings of anxiety and restlessness are caused from withdrawal (or not having a cigarette because the body needs one).

Smokers often mention stress as a reason keeping them from quitting.

Smokers have learned to use tobacco to help cope with stress. Remember... Smoking and stress do not have to go hand in hand. There are other healthy things you can do to make yourself feel better!

Cigarettes will not take away your problems.

- ✓ Smoking will usually only add to the problems you already have.

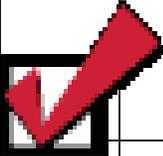
When you quit, you have to learn new ways of handling stress.

- ✓ Physical activity and healthy eating can help to reduce stress.
- ✓ Making sure that you have time to do the things you like to do is very important.
- ✓ Sometimes writing down your feelings and frustrations will help to relieve stress.
- ✓ Making a “to do” list each day can also be very helpful. As you complete them, check them off and you will see everything that you accomplished. This technique helps you to remember and will also take away the stress of worrying to remember to do them.

- ✓ For some people, being outside in nature is helpful. Sitting at a park or on a beach can be very relaxing. Sometimes just closing your eyes and imagining that you are at your favorite place can be relaxing.
- ✓ Spiritual practices such as prayer and meditation can help you to have a more peaceful life.
- ✓ Twelve step recovery programs teach a very valuable tool: **“Take One Day at a Time”**.
- ✓ Learning relaxation exercises is also very important.
 - Deep Breathing
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Making a “TO DO” list each day can be a helpful tool.

As you complete each item, you will be able to see all that you accomplished. Writing things down the night before helps you to get them off of your mind so that you do not have to worry about it during the night.

	TO DO LIST
	Date _____