

# Stress and chronic pain

Managing stress is an important part of managing pain. Here are some tips to help reduce stress in your life.

## Healthy lifestyle

### Keep moving

Exercise is an effective and natural stress reliever.

### Get more sleep

Schedule 9 to 10 hours of sleep per night.

### Make healthy meal choices

Do not skip meals. Make healthy food choices. Avoid too much caffeine, energy drinks, or sugary snacks.

### Make time to relax and have fun

Encourage fun activities. Schedule time for fun with friends and family.

## Healthy behaviors

### Learn activities to relieve stress

Relaxed breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga, or listening to music.

### Spend time in nature

A trip to the park or a hike in the woods is a great way to soak up some sunshine and recharge your batteries.

### Create a balanced schedule

All work and no play is a recipe for burnout. Try to find a balance in your daily life.

## Healthy relationships

### Schedule time for group activities

Join a community group or attend a faith-based gathering.

### Express your feelings

Instead of bottling them up, help your child identify their emotions and talk about how they feel.

### Make your home a relaxing place.

Focus on reducing conflict.

## Healthy thinking

### Reframe and rethink problems

Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. For example, rather than fuming about a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to pause and regroup while listening to your favorite radio station.

### Look at the big picture

Take a perspective of stressful situation. Ask yourself how important will it be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? Is it really worth getting upset over?

If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.

### Practice gratitude

When stress is getting you down, take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life.

### Adjust your standards

Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others.

## Develop a stress toolbox

Fill it with your fun ideas and try to do one every day, even if you're not feeling well.

- Go for a walk
- Listen to music
- Practice yoga
- Watch a comedy
- Play with a pet
- Spend time in nature
- Get a massage
- Take a long bath
- Savor a warm drink
- Work on a hobby
- Call a good friend
- Write in your journal
- Relax with a good book
- Light a scented candle
- Work in your garden

Write down your ideas for managing stress:

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These instructions are only general guidelines. Your healthcare provider may give you special instructions. If you have questions or concerns, please call your healthcare provider.