Prolonged stress is not healthy. It often leads to both behavioral and physical ailments. You first must be conscious of your stress level, then make a concerted effort to deal with it. Add some of these to your defense against stress.

- Get up 15 minutes earlier.
- Prepare for morning the night before.
- Avoid tight fitting clothes.
- Set appointments ahead.
- Don’t rely on memory.
- Write it down.
- Practice preventive maintenance.
- Make duplicate keys.
- Say “no” more often.
- Set priorities.
- Avoid negative people.
- Use time wisely.
- Simplify meal times.
- Always make copies of important papers.
- Anticipate your needs.
- Repair things that don’t work properly.
- Ask for help with the jobs you dislike.
- Break large tasks into bite-size portions.
- Look at problems as challenges.
- Un-clutter your life.
- Smile.
- Be prepared for rain.
- Tickle a baby.
- Pet a friendly dog/cat.
- Don’t know all the answers.
- Look for the silver lining.
- Say something nice to someone.
- Teach a kid to fly a kite.
- Walk in the rain.
- Schedule play time into every day.
- Take a bubble bath.
- Be aware of the decisions you make.
- Believe in yourself.
- Stop saying negative things to yourself.
- Visualize winning.
- Develop your sense of humor.
- Stop thinking tomorrow will be a better day.
- Set goals for yourself.
- Dance a jig.
- Say, “Hello,” to a stranger.
- Ask a friend for a hug.
- Look up at the stars.
- Practice breathing slowly.
- Learn to whistle a tune.
- Listen to a symphony.
- Watch a ballet.
- Curl up in bed and read a story.
- Do something brand new.
- Stop a bad habit.
- Buy a flower.
- Take time to smell the flower.
- Find support from others.
- Ask someone to be your “vent partner.”
- Do it today.
- Work at being cheerful and optimistic.
- Put safety first.
- Do everything in moderation.
- Pay attention to your appearance.
- Strive for excellence, not perfection.
- Stretch your limits a little each day.
- Look at a work of art.
- Hum a jingle.
Maintain your weight. Plant a tree. Feed the birds. Practice grace under pressure. Stand up and stretch. Always have a “Plan B.” Doodle. Memorize a joke, and pass it on. Be responsible for your own feelings. Learn to meet your own needs. Become a better listener. Tell someone, “Have a good day,” in pig Latin. Throw a paper airplane. Exercise every day. Learn the words to a new song. Get to work early. Clean out one closet. Play patty cake with a toddler. Go on a picnic. Take a different route to work. Leave work early (with permission). Put an air freshener in your car. Watch a movie, and eat popcorn. Write a note to a far away friend. Go to a ballgame and scream. Cook a meal and eat it by candlelight. Remember that stress is an attitude. Keep a journal. Practice a monster smile. Remember you always have options. Have a support network of people, places and things. Quit trying to “fix” other people. Get enough sleep. Talk less, and listen more. Freely praise other people. Recognize the importance of unconditional love. Relax. You have the rest of your life.

For a confidential, no-cost assessment Call 901-377-4733 or 1-800-232-LAKE 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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