A Variety of Ideas for Responding to Stress
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Frequently, people are hoping for a list of simple suggestions they can follow to reduce the stress in their lives. Unfortunately, there aren't any simple answers. Each person is unique and what works well with one person may not help someone else at all!

List of ideas below have been compiled from a variety of resources. Each idea has worked well for someone somewhere. Some of them, at least, may work well for you, too. Add to the list whenever you can.

I. ABOUT STRESS
- A. Understand what stress is and what it can do.
- B. Identify your major sources of stress.
- C. Anticipate stressful periods and plan for them.
- D. Practice of variety stress management techniques – developer a repertoire.
- E. Learn to identify the opportunities for personal growth inherit in major sources of stress.
- F. Find the level of stress that's best for you.

II. PROBLEM SOLVING
- A. Define your problem specifically – get beyond symptoms. Break it into manageable pieces.
- B. Gather sufficient information about the problem to put it in perspective.
- C. Understand why it is a problem for you.
- D. Review your past experience with this or similar problems.
- E. Develop and evaluate a set of alternative courses of action
- F. Select a course of action and go with it!

III. FEELINGS
- A. Know the difference between your thoughts and your feelings
- B. Don't sit on feelings. Express them to yourself and to others.
- C. Learn to be flexible and adaptive.
- D. Do an honest appraisal of your "flat sides."
- E. Remember that feelings are facts.

IV. BEHAVIORAL SKILLS
- A. Do not use the word "can't" when you mean "won't" (e.g., I can't stop smoking).
- B. Do not live a "should" life.
- C. Use "wasted" or "dead" time productively.
- D. Be assertive. Stand up for your rights.
- E. Manage conflicts openly and directly.
- F. Use "I" statements; avoid placing blame.
- G. Give positive feedback to others.
- H. Learn to say "No."
- I. Deal with problems right away, when they're small, and not later when they're larger.
- J. Reality test your expectations, avoiding both the grandiose and the catastrophic.
- K. Learn to let go of situation and take breaks.

V. RELATIONSHIPS

A. Ask for direct help and be open to it when you get it.
B. Develop empathy for others.
C. Make an honest assessment of your needs for support and your present satisfaction with the support you receive.
D. List six people you would like to have a better relationship with identify one actions step you will take to improve each relationship.
E. Rid yourself of “dead” or “toxic” relationships.
F. Maintain high quality relationships both on and off the job.
G. Tell the members of your support network that you value them.

VI. LIFE STYLE

A. Engage in some regular form of vigorous exercise.
B. Engage in some regular form of stretching exercise.
C. Engage in some regular form of recreational exercise.
D. Engage in some regular form of systematic relaxation.
E. Use alcohol in moderation or not at all.
F. Do not use tobacco.
G. Regularly get sufficient rest. Maintain recommended weight.
H. Eat a balanced diet.
I. Avoid caffeine.
J. Avoid junk food and other foods high in sugar, salt, white flour, saturated fat, and chemicals.
K. Plan your use of time well both on a daily and long-term basis.
L. Seek out variety and change of pace.
M. Take total responsibility for your lot in life – stop being a victim.
N. Maintain an optimistic bias.
O. Find a holistic physician, establish a psychological baseline, and plan for improving your wellness.
P. Don't get hassled by small stuff.

VII. SPIRITUAL

A. It's all small stuff!
B. Engage in prayer and meditation regularly.
C. Find your sense of purpose and direction.
D. Seek spiritual guidance.
E. Learn to transcend situations.
F. Believe in yourself.
G. Increase your awareness of the interrelatedness of all things.

VIII. MAKING CHANGES

A. Plan to succeed.
B. Establish a “one step at a time” project attitude.
C. Make change projects small and manageable.
D. Practice changes rigorously for 21 days and then decide whether or not to incorporate them or reject them.
E. Celebrate successes – reward yourself.

AND KEEP ON BREATHING!