

GuidanceResources®

Self-care for Stress Relief

To feel your best, you must take care of yourself. That means eating well, exercising, keeping work and home life balanced and maintaining good relationships. There are times, however, when even these things can't prevent stress and anxiety from creeping in. That's why self-care is so important.

Taking a small amount of time out of your busy schedule just for yourself is key to handling all your duties while getting the most out of life. Try these other tips to give yourself the attention you need to be your best.

- **Exercise.** Physical exertion is a great way to relieve or reduce stress, so try exercising a little before you start work. Put in some time on the treadmill or sign up for a morning spin class.
- **Take a vacation.** How long has it been since you were away from the office for more than a three-day weekend? There is a reason you get vacation days every year, and that is so you can take an actual vacation where you are not checking your email or voicemail every two hours for messages. Go someplace, leave your work behind and spend time doing things for yourself, not for your employer.
- **Get enough sleep.** Lack of sleep affects your immune system and your judgment and makes you more likely to snap over minor irritations. Most people need seven to eight hours a day.
- **Stretching.** Stress often appears as tension in our necks, shoulders and head. Stretching exercises can relieve tension, make your body more flexible and produce a calming effect. Even just shrugging your shoulders, stretching your arms and rolling your neck a few times a day can have positive effects.
- **Be positive.** Our thought patterns often cause or contribute to the stress that we are feeling. The next time you encounter a stressful situation, take a moment to tune into your thoughts and feelings. Write these thoughts down and then write down a more positive replacement.

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