

## Stress help sheet

Life can be full of frustrations and demands, which can cause us to feel stressed and anxious from time to time.

Stress isn't always bad. In fact, in small doses, it can help you perform under pressure and motivate you to do your best.

Stress is a normal response to things that make you feel threatened or upset you in some way. However, sometimes the feelings of stress or anxiety may hinder your daily life.

### What are the signs of stress?

Physical	Emotional	Behavioural	Cognitive
tightness in your chest	feeling cranky	difficulty sleeping	finding it hard to focus
heart beating faster	losing your patience	eating too much or not enough	constant worrying
feeling shaky	feeling overwhelmed	using alcohol or drugs to relax	poor judgment
nausea/diarrhea	moodiness, irritability, anger	withdrawing from others	memory problems

### Managing Stress

These six simple ways to live well can help you manage stress and improve the quality of your life.



#### Connect

- Talk to someone about how you are feeling.
- Keep in touch with friends and family who can provide emotional support.
- Build positive relationships with those around you.



#### Energise

- Eat a balanced, more natural, less processed diet.
- If you do drink alcohol, keep it to no more than 2 standard drinks on any day and have at least 2 days of no alcohol per week.
- Remember to drink lots of water.
- Practise good sleep habits – refer to our fact sheet on *Tips for a better night's sleep*.

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#### Move

- Physical activity increases the blood flow to the brain. It can boost your mood and improve your wellbeing.
- Try to be active for at least 30 minutes each day. It doesn't have to be all in one go. 10-15 minutes slots during the day is just as good.



#### Be present

- Try to pay attention to the present moment.
- Be observant - recognise your body's response to stress.
- Practise mindfulness or a relaxation exercise regularly.



#### Learn

- Take some time out for yourself.
- Try something you always wanted to do but never had time for.
- Revisit an old hobby or activity, something that brings you joy.



#### Think positive

- Have a goal, something that gets you out of bed in the morning.
- Set yourself priorities and focus on what you have achieved at the end of the day rather than what you haven't.
- Set some time each day to think about things or people in your life who you are grateful for, or positive things that happened that day.

Download the **Be active weekly planner** to make a positive start on your journey to managing stress.

Talk to your health care provider right away if you are having suicidal thoughts, feeling overwhelmed or feel you cannot cope.

In addition, free support services that operate 24/7 days a week include **Lifeline** (13 11 14, [lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)) or **BeyondBlue** (1300 224 636; [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)).