

# TIPS FOR STRESS RELIEF

Stress relievers can help restore calm and serenity to your chaotic life. You don't have to invest a lot of time or thought into stress relievers. If your stress is getting out of control and you need quick relief, try one or more of the tips below.

- **GET ACTIVE**

Virtually any form of physical activity can act as a stress reliever. Even if you're not an athlete or you're out of shape, exercise can still be a good stress reliever.

- **EAT A HEALTHY DIET**

Eating a healthy diet is an important part of taking care of yourself. Aim to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, and whole grains.

- **AVOID UNHEALTHY HABITS**

Some people may deal with stress by drinking too much caffeine or alcohol, smoking, eating too much, or using illegal substances. These habits can harm your health.

- **MEDITATE**

During meditation, you focus your attention and quiet the stream of jumbled thoughts that may be crowding your mind and causing stress. Meditation can instill a sense of calm, peace and balance that can benefit both your emotional well-being and your overall health. Guided meditation, guided imagery, visualization and other forms of meditation can be practiced anywhere at any time.

- **LAUGH MORE**

Laughing has physical and mental health benefits and it's an easy way to boost your well-being. It can relax muscles and increase blood circulation in the body, which can lessen the physical feelings of stress. Laughter also acts like a physical roller coaster for your body as it spikes your blood pressure, then brings it back down into a less-stress zone leaving you feeling relaxed.

- **CONNECT WITH OTHERS**

While your first instinct may be to isolate yourself, reach out to family and friends and make social connections. Social contact can offer distraction, provide support and help you tolerate life's up and downs. Consider volunteering for a charitable group and help yourself while helping others.

- **ASSERT YOURSELF - SAYING "NO" IS OKAY!**

You might want to do it all, but you can't, at least not without paying a price. Learning to say no or being willing to delegate can help you manage your to-do list and your stress.

- **GET ENOUGH SLEEP**

Stress can cause you to have trouble falling asleep. When you have too much to do – and too much to think about – your sleep can suffer. But sleep is the time when your brain and body recharge.

- **KEEP A JOURNAL, LISTEN TO MUSIC, OR PRACTICE A HOBBY**

Writing down your thoughts and feelings can be a good release for otherwise pent-up emotions. Don't think about what to write – just let it happen. Write whatever comes to mind. Listening to or playing music is a good stress reliever because it can provide a mental distraction, reduce muscle tension and decrease stress hormones. If music isn't one of your interests, turn your attention to another hobby you enjoy.

- **SEEK SUPPORT**

If new stressors are challenging your ability to cope or if self-care measures just aren't relieving your stress, you may need to look into seeking support. Professional counselors or therapists can help you identify sources of your stress and learn new coping tools. Learn more at [www.eastersealsmorc.org](http://www.eastersealsmorc.org)