

# Enhance Your Health

## Ways to Handle Tension

The best coping method is a lifestyle that involves the regular practice of health-enhancing activities. The goal of a healthy lifestyle is to strike a balance in all areas of life, because that's how we function best. Because each of us is unique, we need to develop our own approaches to wellness in the following areas:

### Self-Awareness

- Decide what you find enjoyable and meaningful. Then set some goals and plan ways to achieve them.
- Learn to recognize the point at which tensions become unmanageable. Common signs of tension overload are tense muscles, especially in the back and neck, headaches, stomach upsets, sleep problems, inability to concentrate, and feelings of anxiety, irritability or depression.
- Take time to identify your stressors and find ways to change or avoid them.

### Positive Thinking

- Control your attitude and change the way you think.
- Develop your self-esteem. A positive self-image is a powerful tool for managing tension.
- Live in the present and focus on the task at hand.

### Interpersonal Relations

- Talk to others. It's a healthy way to relieve tension, and it often helps us find solutions.
- Remain active socially. Many people turn inward when they feel anxious, but social outings help keep problems in perspective and enhance self-esteem.

### Physical Fitness

- Develop a good exercise plan.

### Relaxation

- Try relaxation techniques. They quiet the mind and body and actually reverse the effects of stress.
- Balance work and play.
- Take up a hobby.

### Nutrition Awareness

- Plan your meals ahead of time so you can carefully consider nutritional values.
- Balance food intake with physical activity.
- Limit consumption of fats, sugars, salt and additives.

### Stress Management

- Stagger major life changes, such as job changes, moves, and births.
- Use time efficiently.



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- Change activities when you feel yourself tensing up.
- Get enough rest. Most adults need at least seven hours of sleep a night.
- Use your creativity to find new ways to handle stressful situations.
- Be good to yourself, especially when you're feeling tense. Listen to music, soak in a warm bath, or see a movie – whatever you enjoy.

If emotional tensions interfere with normal functioning for more than two weeks, seek professional help.

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