

Wellness WEDNESDAY



April is Stress Management Month



Managing stress is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle and knowing how to manage it can improve your mental and physical well-being. Stress affects women and men differently, and women experience post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety more commonly than men.

TIPS TO MANAGE YOUR STRESS:

1. Recognize the signs of stress.

Being physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week can lower blood pressure by 4 to 10 percent. Our body sends signals that it's stressed: finding it hard to concentrate, headaches, tight muscles, clenched teeth, feeling on the edge, irritable or withdrawn. Learn not only to recognize these signals but also how to act. For example: deep breathing, going for a walk, write down your thoughts and taking some time to focus and relax.

2. Take time for yourself.

Make taking care of yourself a daily routine. It's not selfish or self-indulgent and it might require saying "no" to requests or prioritizing yourself along with your responsibilities. Work in time to exercise, eat healthy foods, participate in relaxing activities and sleep. Take time to notice the "good minutes" in each day or do something that you enjoy, such as reading a book or listening to music, which can be a way to shift your attention and focus on the positive rather than the negative.

3. Look at problems or concerns through a different lens.

Experts call changing the way we think about and respond to stress "reframing." Reduce anger in response to rude or aggressive behavior by imagining what might be happening in that person's life. Keeping situations in perspective is an important way to boost stress resilience. Other steps include positive thinking and creating plans before you begin to resolve problems.

Mental Health America provides some tips on how to reduce your stress by utilizing a stress screener. Take the stress screener <https://mhanational.org/get-involved/stress-screener>