



# Tackling stress – tips and techniques that can help

## Aetna Employee Assistance Program

### Did you know?

**43 percent of all adults suffer adverse health effects from stress.<sup>1</sup>**

**Women and men experience stress differently.<sup>1</sup>**

**40% of workers reported their job was very or extremely stressful.<sup>2</sup>**

**25% view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives.**

<sup>1</sup>American Psychological Association Practice Directorate, "Americans Engage in Unhealthy Behaviors to Manage Stress." February 23, 2006. Available online at [http://apahelpcenter.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=press\\_releases&item=23](http://apahelpcenter.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=press_releases&item=23). Accessed July 2007.

<sup>2</sup>American Institute of Stress, "Job Stress." Available online at [www.stress.org/job.htm](http://www.stress.org/job.htm). Accessed August 2007.

**Feeling stressed sometimes is perfectly natural. However, too much stress can damage your personal or work life and your health.**

### What can you do?

Take steps that can help you regain control and get a healthy balance in your life.

#### Problem solve

Try to resolve stressful situations:

- Break problems into smaller pieces to make them less overwhelming.
- Focus on those that really need your attention and leave the rest.
- Know your limits, be flexible and be realistic about your choices.

#### Communicate

Lighten your load. Talk with family, friends or a mental health professional and ask for help, if needed.

#### Exercise

Keep physically active. Regular exercise reduces stress and helps protect the cardiovascular and immune systems from its consequences.

#### Take care of you

If you regularly eat a well-balanced diet and get a good night's sleep, you'll have more energy to cope. And, you'll be less likely to come down with stress-related illnesses.

#### Practice relaxation

Sit somewhere comfortable. Close your eyes and relax your muscles. Focus on regular breathing. Continuously repeat one word, out loud or to yourself. Make it a simple word, like "relax" or "easy," or a meaningless word like the "om" used in meditation. Continue for 10 – 15 minutes.

### Is stress bad?

Not necessarily. Mild stress can motivate us to get focused and try harder when completing a project or assignment.



# True or False?

**Q: Stress is only caused by external factors and situations.**

**A: False.** Stress can also be caused by not taking care of your body, physically. Some effective stress management techniques include exercise, relaxation and meditation.

## Put pen to paper

Writing about how you feel can be a release and bring a sense of well-being.

## Remove stressors

Setting limits and boundaries is a great way to get rid of stressors. It's hard. But keeping your life manageable will reduce your stress and put you back in control.



## Manage your time

Thinking ahead can reduce stress. Set priorities. Write a to-do list and schedule time to work on top priorities first. Record work, family and home activities on a central calendar.

## Contact your EAP

For more information and support, your Aetna Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is here for you. It's a confidential service that helps employees and their families manage life's challenges.

**Free, confidential support.  
Anytime, day or night.**

**Call toll free:**

**1-888-AETNA-EAP**

**(1-888-238-6232)**

**Or visit [www.aetnaeap.com](http://www.aetnaeap.com)  
and enter your company ID.**



## Well said?

**For fast-acting relief,  
try slowing down.**

~Lily Tomlin

**Sometimes the most  
important thing in a whole  
day is the rest we take  
between two deep breaths.**

~Etty Hillesum

**There is more to life than  
increasing its speed.**

~Mohandas K. Gandhi

**Here's a two-step formula  
for handling stress. Step  
number one: Don't sweat the  
small stuff. Step number two:  
Remember it's all small stuff.**

~Anthony Robbins

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