

Quick Tips for Reducing Stress

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Persistent anxiety takes its toll on your emotions, and it affects your body as well. In fact, anxiety sets off a trail of physical responses such as chest pain, heart palpitations, shaking, chills, hot flashes, nausea, diarrhea, stomach pain, insomnia, headaches, back pain, shortness of breath, and fatigue.

The treatment of persistent anxiety includes psychotherapy (behavior modification and/or cognitive therapy) and medication. Following are some tips you can use to reduce your anxiety.

Eat a well-balanced diet. Restlessness, irritability, inability to concentrate, and angry outbursts may sometimes be the result of poor nutrition.

Exercise regularly. Noncompetitive activities that make your whole body work can help reduce anxiety.

Get an adequate amount of sleep. Learn to recognize your body's signals that indicate a need for more or less sleep.

Include recreation in your regular routine. Take time to do things that are enjoyable as well as relaxing. Try to maintain a balance of work, rest, and play in your life.

Practice deep breathing. When you are feeling anxious, focusing on breathing from the diaphragm and not the chest can help restore calm.

Face your fears. Identify the source of your anxious or fearful thoughts and talk to someone about it.

Avoid substance abuse. Do not attempt to "calm your nerves" by drinking alcohol or using drugs.

Avoid caffeinated beverages. Excessive use of coffee, tea, soda, etc. has

been shown to cause or trigger anxiety.

Learn to walk away. When you are feeling anxious or nervous, taking a break or going for a walk can help you feel better.

Turn inward for calm. Learn meditation or spend quiet time in prayer.