

GET MOVING TO MANAGE STRESS

You know that exercise does your body good, but you're too busy and stressed to fit it into your routine. Hold on a second — there's good news when it comes to exercise and stress.

Virtually any form of exercise, from aerobics to yoga, can act as a stress reliever. If you're not an athlete or even if you're out of shape, you can still make a little exercise go a long way toward stress management. Discover the connection between exercise and stress relief — and why exercise should be part of your stress management plan.

EXERCISE & STRESS RELIEF

- It pumps up your endorphins. Physical activity helps bump up the production of your brain's feel-good neurotransmitters, called endorphins. Although this function is often referred to as a runner's high, a rousing game of tennis or a nature hike also can contribute to this same feeling.
- It's meditation in motion. After a fast-paced game of racquetball or several laps in the pool, you'll often find that you've forgotten the day's irritations and concentrated only on your body's movements.
- As you begin to regularly shed your daily tensions through movement and physical activity, you may find that this focus on a single task, and the resulting energy and optimism, can help you remain calm and clear in everything you do.
- It improves your mood. Regular exercise can increase self-confidence, it can relax you, and it can lower the symptoms associated with mild depression and anxiety. Exercise can also improve your sleep, which is often disrupted by stress, depression and anxiety. All of these exercise benefits can ease your stress levels and give you a sense of command over your body and your life.



STICK WITH IT

- Set SMART goals. Write down SMART goals — specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-limited goals.
- If your primary goal is to reduce stress in your life and recharge your batteries, your specific goals might include committing to walking during your lunch hour three times a week or, if needed, finding a baby sitter to watch your children so that you can slip away to attend a cycling class.
- Find a friend. Knowing that someone is waiting for you to show up at the gym or the park can be a powerful incentive. Working out with a friend, co-worker or family member often brings a new level of motivation and commitment to your workouts.
- Change up your routine. If you've always been a competitive runner, take a look at other less competitive options that may help with stress reduction, such as Pilates or yoga classes. As an added bonus, these kinder, gentler workouts may enhance your running while also decreasing your stress.
- Exercise in increments. Even brief bouts of activity offer benefits. For instance, if you can't fit in one 30-minute walk, try three 10-minute walks instead. Interval training, which entails brief (60 to 90 seconds) bursts of intense activity at almost full effort, is being shown to be a safe, effective and efficient way of gaining many of the benefits of longer duration exercise.

Questions?

Contact The Wellness Council of Arizona at contact@welcoaz.org or (520) 293-3369



SETTING A

S M A R T

GOAL

Most people know WHAT they should be doing for better health, but actually doing it may become difficult. Learning how to use SMART goals and how to set them specifically for health and wellness objectives, will increase the likelihood of YOU achieving a lifestyle for better health.

S: Specific	What? Where? How?
M: Measurable	From and to? Start and Stop?
A: Attainable	How realistic is your goal?
R: Relevant	How does this fit into your life now?
T: Time- Based	When? How long?

EATING FOR MORE ENERGY AND LESS STRESS



- **Eat smaller, more frequent meals.** By eating smaller but more frequent meals, you will maintain a steady dose of energy instead of experiencing food comas. Don't snack on fatty or sugar laden junk food though. You may get a short 30-minute burst of alertness, but it'll be quickly followed by a debilitating crash.
- **Get your Vitamin C.** When your body is stressed from emotional or physical stress, your adrenal glands will use up a lot of vitamin C. It's important to replenish C often! Study after study shows the correlation between citric acid deficiency and chronic fatigue. Vitamin C also helps you absorb more nutrients from food.
- **Eat lots of Berries.** Especially berries that are blue, red or purple. The color comes from anthocyanins, a powerful antioxidant, that boosts energy. Any kind of berry will contain tons.
- **Enjoy a cup of Tea.** In a recent study, noted that drinking a cup of tea 4-6 times a day reduces stress hormone levels in your body. The study's results suggest "drinking black tea may speed up recovery from daily stresses in life". Green tea is also great for antioxidants and reducing stress.
- **Eat more soluble fiber.** Soluble fiber is the kind that slows down the rate of absorption of sugars. It evens out your energy levels by preventing a sugar high and crash. Don't worry too much about which kind of fiber you're getting – they're both good for you. Insoluble Fiber: Promotes regular bowel movements, remove toxic waste from the body. Sources: vegetables such as green beans and leafy vegetables, fruit skins, whole wheat, corn bran, seeds & nuts. Soluble Fiber: Bind with fatty acids and help remove from the body before absorbed through intestinal wall, prolong stomach emptying time so that sugar is released and absorbed more slowly. It lowers total and LDL cholesterol and regulates blood sugar. Sources: Oat/oat bran, dried beans and peas, nuts, barley, flax seed, fruits, vegetables like carrots, psyllium husk
- **Get more Ginseng.** Ginseng is well-known to have energy-boosting properties. It is an adaptogen, which means it builds resistance to stress and boosts energy. A ginseng supplement or sipping tea can help improve energy.
- **Have a piece of chocolate.** Not too much! But if you're going to have some candy, it might as well be chocolate. Pick the super dark kind for added antioxidants and less sugar.
- **Don't drink yourself to sleep.** Alcohol keeps your body from entering deep sleep, so even if you get the same hours of sleep, you won't feel as rested. Limit alcohol the hours before bedtime to get the best night's sleep.
- **Eat something small before bed.** Before turning in, a carbohydrate-rich snack can supply serotonin to help you fall asleep, but go easy. Too much food can reduce the quality of sleep. Snack ideas: oatmeal with banana, brown rice cakes, low fat popcorn, small bowl of cereal, piece of toast or English muffin, whole grain crackers or pretzels with hummus.