

Minimising the Effects Of Stress

Recognising the physical and mental symptoms of stress can help you figure out what triggers a particular feeling. When you have a better understanding of the causes of your stress, you can more easily avoid or manage these situations. Common symptoms include:

Headches Tense Muscles Fatigue Trouble Sleeping
Eating Too Much or Drinking Too Little Heartburn Depression
Unable to Concentrate Irritable Neck or Back Pain

If you're unable to avoid the situations that cause you to feel stressed, try to find ways to help lower your stress level. There are many ways you can do this. If the one you pick doesn't work, try another one. There is no one perfect way to minimise your stress level--it's all about what you like and what works best for you.

Take Action!

Here are a few ways you can minimise your stress.

- Go outside for a short walk. Take in the scenery and breathe in fresh air.
- Petting animals has been proven to be a good form of stress relief. Consider adopting a pet if you're able to take care of one.
- Set aside 20 to 30 minutes to read, reflect or meditate. Quiet time away from the telly, your computer or other electronics can help you relax.



Organising Your Medications

Managing multiple medications can be a full-time job. Staying organised and asking questions about your medicine can help treatment work most effectively and help you avoid possible side effects. Think of your GP and your chemist as partners on your health team who can help you find--and stick to--the right routine.

1. **Make a list of the names of your medications. Note the dosage.**
You can find this information on the front of the bottle. Bring this with you to your next appointment.
2. **Discuss any side effects you observe when taking your medicine.**
Let your GP know which medicines you've stopped taking if that applies.
3. **Write any questions down and bring them with you.**
Don't be afraid to ask questions during your next appointment. It is very important for you to understand how your medicine works and why you are taking it. Remember, your GP is here to help you.
4. **Ask your GP to discuss potential interactions with your medicine.**
What foods should you avoid? What about other prescription medications, over-the-counter treatments or alcohol? If you feel you won't remember this information, ask your GP to write a list for you.



Get Activated for a Healthier You

Good health is a marathon, not a race.

When it comes to your health, slow and steady progress is key. Much like running a marathon, your path to better health requires a realistic plan and persistence. There are no shortcuts.

As you begin your journey toward taking better care of your health, remember the importance of making simple choices so you don't become overwhelmed. Remember: Start with a small goal, make one or two changes to your habits, and you will reach it. Focus on what motivates you AND what is achievable.



Take Action!

Think about a time when you were doing something very good for your health: think about how that felt. Did it feel good or did it feel difficult? How could you continue to do that for yourself today? Is there anything you would change?

You Are What You Eat

Knowing your Body Mass index (BMI) is a great way to track your risk for future health problems. Your GP should be able to provide you with a chart that will allow you to match your height with your current weight. BMI is calculated based on those two measurements.

If you want to or need to reduce your BMI, there are many places to start. Pairing a bit of exercise with the Eatwell Plate Method (filling 1/3 of your plate with fruits and vegetables, 1/3 with grains, 1/6 with protein and 1/8 with dairy) is one good option. Continuing to substitute healthy snacks for junk food is another great option. The key is consistency.

Think of the saying "You are what you eat." Would you rather be a bag of **greasy crisps** or a **refreshing, crisp apple**?

Take Action!

Here are some goals to consider. Choose one and see how you do.

- Track your BMI at least once every 10-14 days. Write down your findings in a notebook and share this information during your next medical appointment.
- Try to maintain a healthy diet that includes a variety of nutritious foods.
- Ask your GP questions if you're concerned or confused about your BMI. Remember, this is your time and your GP is there to help YOU.

