

Strategies for Transforming Stress

“The time to relax is when you don’t have time for it.” —Sydney J. Harris

Stress is unavoidable. Yet it’s also manageable. You can change your responses to stress and have a huge impact on your resilience. You can stop the cycle of chronic stress and worry with small changes. Improving your ability to transform stress will strengthen your energy reserves, improve tissue health, and create a supportive environment for healthy aging. Take deep breaths, and transform stress with confidence and skills.

You are not alone—most American report moderate to high daily stress, which can worsen and even cause health conditions.

Take a few healthy steps every week, and see how it changes your ability to cope with and transform stress. Proven stress management techniques include:

Daily Suggestions	Weekly Suggestions
Go for a walk	Spend time with supportive friends or family
Listen to music—or dance	Look at something you consider beautiful (i.e., art or nature)
Make & eat a healthy meal	Try yoga, tai chi, or qi gong
Breathe deeply and center yourself	Adopt an active hobby like water aerobics, bicycling, or gardening
Journal about positive things for which you are grateful	Write a letter to someone you care about
Scan your body and be aware of how you feel	Get a massage, sit in a sauna, or soak in a hot tub
Be creative (i.e., adult coloring books, watercolors, sketch, crochet, write, draw)	Sleep until you wake naturally
Give yourself a hand or foot massage	Visualize a place you find relaxing, like a beach, a park, a childhood room, etc.
Express gratitude to someone	Find a funny movie or book and laugh

In scholarly research, practicing relaxation techniques benefited individuals with a variety of conditions including:

- Anxiety
- Childbirth
- Depression
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Insomnia
- Chemotherapy-induced nausea
- Pain in children and adolescents
- Smoking cessation
- Temporomandibular joint dysfunction