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Stressed Out? Equip Yourself with Tools for Managing Life's Stressors

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Throughout the course of life, stress can take many forms. Positive stress, also known as "eustress", occurs in anticipation of events such as a wedding, a birthday celebration, or an upcoming first date. These are temporary stressors which come and go. Conversely, events like the death of a loved one, or a serious illness cause "distress". This could cause a full-blown stress response, often called the "fight-or-flight" response. If unmanaged, negative stress can result in a decrease in personal productivity and have adverse effects on physical health, such as increased blood pressure and decreased immune system response.

Stress is a certainty in life; however, not everyone's threshold for stress is the same. That is why some people work best under pressure, while others know that they must pace themselves to avoid distress. So then, aside from hiding under a rock, what can you do to prepare yourself for life's stressors? Simple lifestyle changes and effective stress-management activities can have a significant impact on our ability to view our situation more clearly.

Top Picks for Stress Relief

adapted from *The Mayo Clinic*

Physical Activity – Exercising for 30-minutes each day improves your mood by increasing the production of endorphins.

Prayer and/or Meditation – Find a quiet space to spend time focusing on gratitude or inspirational scripture.

Laughter – While it's not the cure-all, laughter lightens your mental load and actually causes positive physical changes in your body.

Connect – Reaching out to family and friends, volunteering, and attending church helps to distract you and increases your social support to help you weather the ups-and-downs.

Assert Yourself – Prioritize your tasks, learn to say "no," or delegate.

Sleep – Your body needs at least 8 hours of sleep each night. Develop a quiet, relaxing bedtime routine and stick to a consistent schedule.

Journal – Writing down your emotions is a great release. Don't worry about grammar or spelling. Just write, throw it away, or save it for later reflection.

Get Musical – Music provides a mental distraction, reduces muscle tension and decreases stress hormones.

Seek Counsel – If you feel overwhelmed or trapped, worry excessively, or have trouble carrying out daily routines or meeting responsibilities, a professional counselor can help you identify sources of your stress and learn new coping skills.

Helpful Links

[Get Moving? Where do I start?](#)

[Time Management](#)

[Prayer and the Difference it Makes](#)

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