

BE A BRAIN-CHANGER STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress management skills are plentiful and they can be considered proactive and reactive. For example, proactive stress management skills are skills you can do ahead of time or periodically in order to alleviate stress from accumulating in your life. Reactive stress management skills are those in which you can do as a result of feeling the stress.

Proactive stress-management skills

- 1. Keep a mood journal in order to track when the stress may be coming. There could be triggers for the stress in your life. People, places or things could affect oncoming stress.**
- 2. Take time for yourself. This may be done by exercising, taking a walk in nature, meditating or deep breathing, going for a manicure or pedicure, watching a preferable movie, reading your favorite book, etc.**
- 3. Join a sport or activity. This type of extracurricular involvement actively works on stress levels while taking your mind off of the event or situation. While engaged in a sport, playing a musical instrument or being involved in an activity you can be put into a meditative state.**
- 4. Get involved in the community or with volunteer work. These types of activities can serve as stress-relievers allowing our minds to be focused in a different area of our lives. In this way, you are less self-involved.**



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Reactive stress-management skills

1. Sit quietly and focus on breathing. Try inhaling for three seconds and exhaling for three seconds. Then, increase that, inhaling for four to five seconds and exhaling for four to five seconds. Another way to control the feeling of stress is to inhale deeply as if you are trying to suck in the room then exhale steadily while putting it all back.
2. Tell yourself that the bodily sensations you are experience as stress are just normal processes within your body and try not to judge yourself. In fact, stop and feel the sensation. Notice what your body is doing and be mindful of its amazing capacity to do what it is doing. Try being thankful for a working body.
3. Use your other senses to notice sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches at that moment. This can be done through hyper-focusing on what is around you.
4. Emotions can be overwhelming at times but they only control you if you let them. Your brain and the thoughts behind these emotions are more powerful than the emotions themselves. Allow yourself to feel anger, frustration, anxiety, sadness, etc. Feel these feelings and realize they are temporary, natural and then give yourself enough time to let them go when you are ready.
5. If you have the urge to take part in a negative coping skills (i.e., self-harm, substance abuse, etc), try to remind yourself the uncomfortable feeling with subside and instead you can do another coping skill such as distraction or any of the others listed above. Here is a link for [additional coping skills](#)

