

QUICK STRESS RELIEVERS



Stress is an inevitable part of the human experience. It affects all of us, young and old, individually and as a family unit. When parents experience stress, it trickles down to their child(ren) and vice versa. We'll never be able to avoid it completely, but we do have the power to control our response to it. These strategies can help you manage your stress to minimize its impact on your and your family's well-being.

GENERAL TIPS

- Before you can manage something, you must be aware that it's there. Mindfulness is key to stress management as it coaches you to check in with yourself and re-calibrate as needed. There are many user-friendly apps available for this purpose.
- You can also find stress management exercises and guided meditations online, in video and audio form.
- Maintaining healthy habits in regard to sleep, exercise, and nutrition can mitigate your stress levels.
- Ignoring your stress doesn't work to rid yourself of it; it makes it worse. Acknowledge your true feelings rather than suppressing them.
- At the end of each day, take a moment to think about what you've accomplished — not what you didn't get done.
- Kids get stressed too. Look for signs, validate for them that it's normal and ok to feel stress, and engage in dialogue about ways to manage it.
- You don't need to hide all of your stress from your child(ren). Kids usually sense when their parent(s) are stressed, even when you don't mention it to them. Instead, talk about how you're feeling and what you plan to do about it; this teaches them about coping strategies and resiliency.
- Set goals for your day, week and month. Narrowing your view will help you feel more in control of the moment and long-term tasks.
- Consider talking to a therapist or your healthcare provider about your worries.

“IN A PINCH” TIPS

Use these in difficult moments, when you and/or your child need a break, or to prevent stress from escalating.

- Set timers on phone for breaks or reminders to take breaks
- Throw ice cubes/chunks on the pavement
- Play balloon volleyball
- **Have a quick dance battle with a friend or family member**
- Do wall push-ups
- Tape a line on the floor and practice balancing like a tightrope
- Lie down on the floor and breathe in, feeling the earth beneath you.
- Save a favorite picture or video on a phone/tablet/other devices; take moment to look at it and absorb the positive feelings you get from doing so
- Treat yourself to aromatherapy with essential oils (lavender to calm, citrus to energize, etc.).
- Come up with a positive mantra and repeat it in your head and/or out loud. "You got this"!
- **Write down things you are grateful for**
- Go for a quick walk
- Take long, deep breaths, with longer exhale than inhale
- Send a vent text to a friend or other loved one who can support you
- Write a note of all the negative things you'd like to say but can't, and then delete it
- **Give yourself a time out:** rather than punishing your child or someone else, step away for a moment (after ensuring your child's safety), take a few breaths, and come back to the situation when you've regained your self-control
- **Give yourself a time-in/special time:** instead of time apart when you and/or your child feel dysregulated, try regulating together. Stop everything, get close, make eye contact, give affection, talk it through, and if possible, step away and do something relaxing together.
- Do a random act of kindness

Jot down the ones you will put into practice.
