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**Stress Management**

- I. Session I: Introduction
  - a. Intake
  - b. Explanation of plan of care
  - c. Brief intro of stress and pain reduction that will be covered next session.
  
- II. Session II: Introduction into Stress Management & Homework.
  - a. Deep Relaxation (Muscle Relaxation & Deep Breathing)
  - b. Guided Imagery (Mindfulness, Relaxation Techniques & Meditation)
  - c. Healthcare Management (Nutrition, Exercise & Sleep Hygiene)
  - d. Pain Management (If applicable)
  
- III. Session III: Review and Evaluation
  - a. Review of Homework & Techniques
  - b. Suggestions for Treatment
  - c. Begin Psych Testing/Evaluation

# Coping with Stress



## Stress and Stressors

Stress is something that is part of normal life, in that it is experienced by everyone from time-to-time. However, some people suffer from stress which is so frequent or so severe that it can seriously impact on their quality of life. Stress can come from a huge range of sources (*stressors*), such as:

- ◇ Relationships with others
- ◇ Work-related issues
- ◇ Study demands
- ◇ Coping with illness
- ◇ Life changes, such as marriage, retirement, divorce
- ◇ Day-to-day activities and tasks
- ◇ Positive events, such as organizing holidays or parties
- ◇ Juggling many roles or tasks at the same time



Some people are aware of what tends to trigger their stress, and this increases their ability to either prevent stress or to handle it more effectively. Many others are less able to deal with stress, and identifying stressors is a key step in this. If you often experience stress, take some time to consider what tends to set it off for you.

## Symptoms of Stress

Some people do not even notice that they are stressed until symptoms begin to occur, including:

- ◇ Irritability or moodiness
- ◇ Interrupted sleep
- ◇ Worrying or feeling of anxiety
- ◇ Back and neck pain
- ◇ Frequent headaches, minor to migraine
- ◇ Upset stomach
- ◇ Increased blood pressure
- ◇ Changes in appetite
- ◇ Rashes or skin breakouts
- ◇ Chest pains
- ◇ Making existing physical problems worse
- ◇ More susceptible to cold/flu and slower recovery

These symptoms reduce quality of life, and people suffering from stress may notice that work performance or relationships suffer more as a result. You may be able to use some the strategies listed here, or you may find it useful to consult a professional for more help.

Source: *Centre for Clinical Interventions*  
See their website [www.cci.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au) for more handouts and resources.

## Stress Management Tips

- 1) **Identify your stressors**, with a stress Log and see if there are some things within your control to manage better. Some things will be beyond your control, for example if you work a job that is based on working towards deadlines then you can't change this without changing jobs. But perhaps you can control some aspects, such as scheduling to have at least a short lunch break each day, or to go to bed earlier so that you have more energy to cope with the daytime.
- 2) Build **regular exercise** into your life - as well as being part of a healthy, balanced lifestyle and giving you more energy, many people find that working out at the gym or playing sport helps them to unwind.
- 3) Make sure that you **eat and sleep well**.
- 4) **Take time out** for family, friends and recreational activities. Most of us know that this is important but we do not all do it. If you find it hard to make time for this, perhaps you need to take deliberate steps to have time out, such as set aside one evening a week where you meet up with friends or enjoy a hobby, or set aside one day of the weekend for relaxing at home.
- 5) **Problem-solving techniques** can be a useful way of clarifying the problem, brainstorming possible solutions, and then choosing one to put into action after listing the pros and cons of each option. See the handout *Problem Solving* for more details about this.
- 6) **Learn calming techniques** such as controlled breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, to train your mind and body to become more relaxed. These techniques require practice but can be helpful with regular use. See handouts *Calming Technique* and *Progressive Muscle Relaxation*.
- 7) You may wish to speak to a professional about **assertiveness training and communication skills** which can help you to deal with challenging situations more effectively, thereby reducing stress. See the handout *Assertive Communication*.
- 8) Last but definitely not least, consider whether there is **negative thinking** which is contributing to your stress. Negative thinking can make us worry more than is necessary, increasing stress, and generally does not motivate us to take positive actions. See the handouts *Thinking & Feeling*, *Analyzing Your Thinking* and *Changing Your Thinking*.



# Stress Log

Keeping a stress log helps you to identify sources of stress, your reactions, and how you manage your response. Making the most of keeping a log involves:

- Recording stress-related information over a period of time,
- Reviewing the information you gather, and
- Identifying strengths, challenges, and next steps to improve how you manage stress.

Ultimately, this process will help you to manage stress and take care of yourself.

**STEP 1: RECORDING STRESS RELATED INFORMATION:** Review the guide/example below to understand how to record your stress experiences. Use the following page (and additional copies) to create your personal stress log.

Date/ Time	Stress/Event	My Response: Thoughts/Feelings/Actions	Rate My Response 1- 3
<b>GUIDE</b> Indicate date and time	Describe the stress/event. Include enough information to provide a picture of what happened, who was involved, etc.	Describe your thoughts/feelings/actions related to the stress/event. Include enough information to provide a picture of what happened, who was involved, the steps you took to manage stress, what happened next etc.	Rate how you handled the stress on scale 1-10, 1 =not well at all 10 =very well
<b>EXAMPLE</b>  Monday 8 AM	When I arrived at work, I was unexpectedly asked to greet customers and answer the phones for the receptionist that was running 2 hours late that morning. This meant that I was not going to be able to do the paperwork I had planned to do before the already full day began.	I was already feeling pressure to get to my paperwork, and this last minute change made me more anxious and frustrated. I thought -- Why me? Can't someone else do it? I always seem to have to pick up when someone else has dropped the ball. So, I just held in my feelings, slammed my paperwork on my desk, and marched to the lobby-- fuming, trying to welcome the customers with a smile.	1

Date/ Time	Stress/Event	My Response: Thoughts/Feelings/Actions	Rate My Response 1-

**MAKE ADDITIONAL COPIES AS  
NEEDED**

**STEP 2: REVIEW THE INFORMATION YOU GATHER:** Review your complete stress log and list the types of stressors you experienced and your responses to stress. Examine this information and note any common themes.

Types of Stressors	Frequency
<b>EXAMPLE:</b> Paperwork and extra, unexpected demands on	1

My Stress Responses	Frequency
<b>EXAMPLE:</b> Anxiety, frustration, Holding feelings inside	1

**MY MOST COMMON STRESSORS ARE:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**MY MOST COMMON STRESS RESPONSES ARE:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 3: MY STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND NEXT STEPS:** All of us experience challenges in managing stress. When we are stressed, it is difficult to see our own strengths and how well we are coping. By looking at both your strengths and challenges that emerge from your stress log information, you can plan next steps for improving how you manage stress and take care of yourself.

- **MY STRENGTHS:** What I did well in managing stress:

**EXAMPLE:** I did not let my feelings of worry and anger interfere with warmly greeting the children during drop-off.

- **MY CHALLENGES:** What are my challenges in managing stress?

**EXAMPLE:** Holding my feelings inside is not healthy for me.

- **NEXT STEPS:** What techniques do I want to focus on and use to manage stress?

**EXAMPLE:** I would like to learn to take a deep breath to calm myself and communicate with my supervisor about my feelings and how to manage my paper work to do my job well.

# Progressive Muscle relaxation

One of the body's reactions to fear and anxiety is muscle tension. This can result in feeling "tense", or can lead to muscle aches and pains, as well as leaving some people feeling exhausted. Think about how you respond to anxiety. Do you "tense up" when you're feeling anxious? Muscle relaxation can be particularly helpful in cases where anxiety is especially associated to muscle tension. This information sheet will guide you through a common form of relaxation designed to reduce muscle tension.

## Muscle tension

Muscle tension is commonly associated with stress, anxiety and fear as part of a process that helps our bodies prepare for potentially dangerous situations. Even though some of those situations may not actually be dangerous, our bodies respond in the same way.

Sometimes we don't even notice how our muscles become tense, but perhaps you clench your teeth slightly so your jaw feels tight, or maybe your shoulders become. Muscle tension can also be associated with backaches and tension headaches.

## Progressive Muscle Relaxation

One method of reducing muscle tension that people have found helpful is through a technique called Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR). In progressive muscle relaxation exercises, you tense up particular muscles and then relax them, and then you practice this technique consistently.

## Preparing for relaxation

When you are beginning to practice progressive muscle relaxation exercises keep in mind the following points.

- **Physical injuries.** If you have any injuries, or a history of physical problems that may cause muscle pain, always consult your doctor before you start.
- **Select your surroundings.** Minimize the distraction to your five senses. Such as turning off the TV and radio, and using soft lighting.
- **Make yourself comfortable.** Use a chair that comfortably seats your body, including your head. Wear loose clothing, and take off your shoes.
- **Internal mechanics.** Avoid practicing after big, heavy meals, and do not practice after consuming any intoxicants, such as alcohol.

## General procedure

- 1 Once you've set aside the time and place for relaxation, slow down your breathing and give yourself permission to relax.
- 2 When you are ready to begin, tense the muscle group described. Make sure you can feel the tension, but not so much that you feel a great deal of pain. Keep the muscle tensed for approximately 5 seconds.
- 3 Relax the muscles and keep it relaxed for approximately 10 seconds. It may be helpful to say

something like "Relax" as you relax the muscle.

- 4 When you have finished the relaxation procedure, remain seated for a few moments allowing yourself to become alert.

## Relaxation sequence

1. **Right hand and forearm.** Make a fist with your right hand.
2. **Right upper arm.** Bring your right forearm up to your shoulder to "make a muscle".
3. **Left hand and forearm.**
4. **Left upper arm.**
5. **Forehead.** Raise your eyebrows as high as they will go, as though you were surprised by something.
6. **Eyes and cheeks.** Squeeze your eyes tight shut.
7. **Mouth and jaw.** Open your mouth as wide as you can, as you might when you're yawning.
8. **Neck. !!!** Be careful as you tense these muscles. Face forward and then pull your head back slowly, as though you are looking up to the ceiling.
9. **Shoulders.** Tense the muscles in your shoulders as you bring your shoulders up towards your ears.
10. **Shoulder blades/Back.** Push your shoulder blades back, trying to almost touch them together, so that your chest is pushed forward.
11. **Chest and stomach.** Breathe in deeply, filling up your lungs and chest with air.
12. **Hips and buttocks.** Squeeze your buttock muscles
13. **Right upper leg.** Tighten your right thigh.
14. **Right lower leg. !!!** Do this slowly and carefully to avoid cramps. Pull your toes towards you to stretch the calf muscle.
15. **Right foot.** Curl your toes downwards.
16. **Left upper leg.** Repeat as for right upper leg.
17. **Left lower leg.** Repeat as for right lower leg.
18. **Left foot.** Repeat as for right foot.

**Practice means progress.** Only through practice can you become more aware of your muscles, how they respond with tension, and how you can relax them. Training your body to respond differently to stress is like any training – practicing consistently is the key.

# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

## Homework

Progressive Relaxation Exercise For homework this week practice this exercise once each day for at least 15 minutes. Then when you do your stress log, be sure to include a description of how the exercise affected you. By tightening a muscle and then releasing, you can feel the difference between tense and relaxed. Actively engaging in progressive muscle relaxation exercises effectively loosens and relaxes the muscles. Make sure not to do any movements that cause pain. If any of these exercises causes discomfort, ease up or stop to ensure that you do not cause muscle cramping or injury. Start by playing the CD provided or reading the guided progressive muscle relaxation exercise script here:

### **Position**

Begin by finding a comfortable position sitting, standing, or lying down. You can change positions any time during the progressive muscle relaxation exercises to make yourself more comfortable as needed.

### **Breathing**

The first progressive muscle relaxation exercise is breathing.

1. Breathe in forcefully and deeply, and hold this breath.

(Hold it...hold it... and now release.)

Let all the air go out slowly, and release all the tension.

2. Take another deep breath in.

(Hold it... and then exhale slowly, allowing the tension to leave your body with the air.

3. Now breathe even more slowly and gently... breathe in...hold...out... ..breathe in...hold...out... Continue to breathe slowly and gently. Allow your breathing to relax you.

### **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

The next progressive muscle relaxation exercise focuses on relaxing the muscles of your body.

#### **LEGS**

1. Start with the large muscles of your legs.
2. Tighten all the muscles of your legs.
3. Tense the muscles further.
4. Hold onto this tension. Feel how tight and tensed the muscles in your legs are right now.
5. Squeeze the muscles harder, tighter... Continue to hold this tension. Feel the muscles wanting to give up this tension.
6. Hold it for a few moments more.... and now relax.
7. Let all the tension go. Feel the muscles in your legs going limp, loose, and relaxed. Notice how relaxed the muscles feel now. Feel the difference between tension and relaxation. Enjoy the pleasant feeling of relaxation in your legs.

#### **ARMS**

1. Now focus on the muscles in your arms.
2. Tighten your shoulders, upper arms, lower arms, and hands.
3. Squeeze your hands into tight fists.
4. Tense the muscles in your arms and hands as

tightly as you can.

5. Squeeze harder.... harder..... hold the tension in your arms, shoulders, and hands. Feel the tension in these muscles.

6. Hold it for a few moments more.... and now release.

7. Let the muscles of your shoulders, arms, and hands relax and go limp. Feel the relaxation as your shoulders lower into a comfortable position and your hands relax at your sides. Allow the muscles in your arms to relax completely.

#### **BREATHING**

Focus again on your breathing. Slow, even, regular breaths. Breathe in relaxation.... and breathe out tension..... in relaxation....and out tension.... Continue to breathe slowly and rhythmically.

#### **BUTTOCKS**

1. Now focus on the muscles of your buttocks.
2. Tighten these muscles as much as you can.
3. Hold this tension..... and then release.
4. Relax your muscles.

#### **BACK**

1. Tighten the muscles of your back now.
2. Feel your back tightening, pulling your shoulders back and tensing the muscles along your spine.
3. Arch your back slightly as you tighten these muscles.
4. Hold.... and relax.
5. Let all the tension go. Feel your back comfortably relaxing into a good and healthy posture.

#### **STOMACH & CHEST**

1. Turn your attention now to the muscles of your chest and stomach.
2. Tighten and tense these muscles. Tighten them further...
3. Hold this tension.... and release.
4. Relax the muscles of your trunk.

#### **FACE**

1. Finally, tighten the muscles of your face.
2. Scrunch your eyes shut tightly, wrinkle your nose, and tighten your cheeks and chin.
3. Hold this tension in your face.... and relax.
4. Release all the tension. Feel how relaxed your face is.

# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

## Homework Continued

Notice all of the muscles in your body.... notice how relaxed your muscles feel. Allow any last bits of tension to drain away. Enjoy the relaxation you are experiencing. Notice your calm breathing.... your relaxed muscles.... Enjoy the relaxation for a few moments.... When you are ready to return to your usual level of alertness and awareness, slowly begin to reawaken your body. Wiggle your toes and fingers. Swing your arms gently. Shrug your shoulders. Stretch if you like. You may now end this progressive muscle relaxation exercise feeling calm and refreshed.

Do this exercise every day, it is only about 15 minutes long, so practice it every day until next session and record below.

Date	Stress Level Before Activity 1-10 1= little 10=unbearable/most intense	My Response: Thoughts/Feelings/Actions	Stress Level After Activity

# Diaphragmatic Breathing Technique

Diaphragmatic breathing involves taking slow, even breaths into the diaphragm (stomach area) instead of the chest.

## When should I use it?

Diaphragmatic breathing can be helpful when trying to decrease intense physical symptoms of stress and anxiety, such as increased heart rate, shortness of breath, and “butterflies” in the stomach.

## Why does it work?

Taking slow, even breaths into the diaphragm creates a stronger relaxation response in the body than taking deep breaths into the chest. This type of breathing stimulates the body’s parasympathetic nervous system, or the part of the nervous system that “shuts down” intense physical symptoms of stress and anxiety.

## How do I do it?

The goals of diaphragmatic breathing are to (1) slow down breathing, (2) make breathing more even, and (3) direct the breath into the diaphragm instead of the chest.

## Practice

To practice, start by placing one hand on your chest and the other hand on your stomach. As you inhale, try to direct the air toward your stomach so that your stomach expands, pushing the hand that is on your stomach away from your body. As you exhale, pull the muscles of your stomach in toward your body to push the air out of your lungs. Most people find this difficult to do at first but that it gets easier with practice. The goal is to eventually be able to make the hand on your stomach move when you inhale and exhale and for the hand on your chest to move as little as possible.

After you have mastered the basics of how to get the air into your diaphragm, then start to focus on slowing down your breathing. Many people find it helpful to count as they inhale and exhale. For example, you could try slowly counting to three as you inhale, and then slowly counting to three as you exhale. This will help you take slow, even breaths in and out.



1. Start by sitting on a comfortable chair or lying on a bed.
2. Take a breath in for 4 seconds (through the nose if possible).
3. Hold the breath for 2 seconds.
4. Release the breath taking 6 seconds (through the nose if possible).
5. Then pause slightly before breathing in again.

Remember that the goal is not to take deep breaths, but to take normal size breaths that are slow and even and are directed into your diaphragm. For this to be most helpful, try first practicing several times for 5-10 minutes when you do not feel that stressed or anxious. Then, as you get better at doing this type of breathing, start practice during times of higher stress. The more your practice, the easier it will be to calm your body when you are under stress.

## Breathing tips

- When you are doing your breathing exercises, make sure that you are using a stomach breathing style rather than a chest breathing style. You can check this by placing one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. The hand on your stomach should rise when you breathe in.
- Try to practice at least once or twice a day at a time when you can relax, relatively free from distraction. This will help to develop a more relaxed breathing habit. The key to progress really is practice, so try to set aside some time each day.

***By using the calming technique, you can slow your breathing down and reduce your general level anxiety. With enough practice, it can even help to reduce your anxiety when you are in an anxious situation.***

# Mindfulness Technique

## What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

This approach involves practicing how to notice when you are automatically drifting into negative thinking and then skillfully redirect your attention back to the positive thinking in the present.



It may be helpful to think of this approach in terms of a radio. That is, imagine that the negative thoughts that drift into your mind as coming from a loud radio that is tuned to a station where the thoughts are very negative and seem to be shouting at you.

The skill in mindfulness is not so much about trying to turn the radio off, but changing the way you listen to the radio. In this way the volume of the radio station can be reduced, and therefore seem less disruptive and distressing.

However, the important thing to remember is this is not a quick fix, it is not easy, and requires regular practice. The thoughts may still shout at you, but you are changing the way you listen. Begin with the formal practice described in this information sheet. Just like any skill, such as learning a musical instrument, you need to practice, practice, practice! By practicing daily you may eventually become better at letting go, and be able to do things in a more informal way.

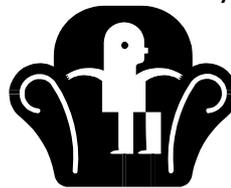


## Steps for Letting Go

To begin, it may be best to start by practicing with minor concerns before moving onto major worries or negative thoughts.



1) To begin the practice, sit down in a chair and adopt a relaxed and alert posture, then ask yourself, **what am I experiencing right now?** What thoughts are around, what feelings are around, and what body sensations?



Allow yourself to just acknowledge, observe and describe these experiences to yourself, without trying to change them or answer the thoughts back. Spend 30 seconds to 1 minute just doing this.

2) Now bringing **your focus of awareness to your breath**, focusing on the sensations of your breath as it moves back and forth in your belly. Binding your awareness to the back and forth movements of the sensations in your belly from moment to moment, and letting all thoughts go. Maybe say to yourself 'relax' or 'let go' on each outward breath. Spend about 30 seconds to 1 minute doing this.

3) Now **expanding your awareness to sensing your whole body breathing**, being aware of sensations throughout your body. If there are any strong feelings around, maybe saying to yourself "whatever it is, it is OK, just let me feel it." Allowing yourself to breathe with these feelings, and if your mind wanders to bothersome thoughts just acknowledge and let go of these - focusing back on sensing your breath. Continue doing this for about 1 minute.

**TIP:** You can try increasing the time of steps 2 & 3 as you start to get more familiar with this skill.

# Healthy Eating

Eating well is one of the best ways you can take care of yourself and those who depend on you. What you eat makes a big difference in the way you look and feel. A healthy diet gives you energy, supports your mood, maintains your weight, and can be a huge support through the different stages in life. Healthy food can help reduce stress, boost energy, combat depression, and improve your overall health. Committing to a healthy diet will help you look and feel your best.

## Eating Habits

When it comes to improving your diet or trying to manage your weight, it's important to remember that our bodies respond differently to different foods, depending on genetics and other health factors. Finding the diet that works for you can take some time and experimentation, but instead of obsessing over specific foods or nutrients, focus more on your overall eating habits. Diets low in sugar, refined carbs, and fried food and high in fruit, vegetables, healthy fats, and high quality sources of protein can help you look and feel your best.

## Cut down Sugar & Refined Carbs

Unlike complex carbs that are rich in fiber, refined or simple carbs (such as white rice or white flour) can lead to a dramatic spike in blood sugar, followed by a rapid crash which leaves you feeling hungry and prone to overeating. Many people consume more sugar and refined carbs than is healthy, but reducing the amount of starches, candy, and desserts is only part of the solution. Sugar is hidden in foods as diverse as canned soups and vegetables, pasta sauce, margarine, frozen dinners, and many foods labelled "low fat" or "reduced fat." All this hidden sugar contributes zero nutrients but lots of empty calories that can cause mood swings and wreck any healthy diet.

**Slowly reduce the sugar in your diet** a little at a time. You'll give your taste buds time to adjust and be able to wean yourself off the craving for sweets and sugary food.

**Replace refined carbs with complex carbs** such as oatmeal, brown rice, beans, fruit, vegetables, and other high fiber foods. You'll feel fuller, more satisfied, and have more energy.

**Check labels** and opt for "sugar-free" or "no added sugar" products. Use fresh or frozen ingredients instead of canned goods, and avoid fast food meals.

**Don't replace fat with carbs.** Manufacturers often replace healthy sources of saturated fat, such as whole fat yogurt, with low-fat versions that are packed with sugar or artificial sweetener to make up for the loss in taste.

**Avoid soda, energy, and sweetened coffee drinks.** One can of soda contains 10-12 teaspoons of sugar and around 150 calories. Switching to diet soda isn't the answer, as artificial sweetener can trigger sugar cravings that contribute to weight gain. Instead, try switching to carbonated water with lemon or a splash of juice.

## Tips to Control Cravings and Boost Energy

In addition to limiting refined carbs and sugary foods, there are eating habits that can have a major effect on your food cravings, stress levels, and energy throughout the day.

**Eat breakfast.** People who eat breakfast tend to weigh less than those who skip it. A solid breakfast gets your metabolism going in the morning and provides energy for the day.

**Eat regularly.** Going too long between meals can make you feel irritable and tired, so support your body's natural cycle of energy by eating a substantial breakfast, a nutritious lunch, an afternoon snack to compensate for the body's natural low point, and a light early dinner.

**Boost energy with quality protein.** Adult women should eat at least 0.8g of [high quality protein](#) per kilogram (2.2lb) of body weight per day—that's 54 grams for a 150lb woman. Older women should aim for 1 to 1.5 grams for each kilogram of weight. A higher intake may help to lower your risk for obesity, osteoporosis, type-2 diabetes, and stroke.

**Control cravings with healthy fats.** Because fat is so dense in calories, a little can go a long way in making you feel full and keeping you feeling fuller for longer.

## Add fiber for regularity and weight loss

Eating foods [high in dietary fiber](#) can lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, and diabetes, improve the health of your skin, and even help you lose weight. Since fiber stays in the stomach longer than other foods, that feeling of fullness will stay with you much longer, helping you eat less. By regulating your blood sugar levels, fiber can help avoid insulin spikes that leave you feeling drained and craving unhealthy foods.

- Good sources of fiber include whole grains, wheat cereals, barley, flaxseed, oatmeal, beans, nuts, vegetables such as carrots, celery, and tomatoes, and fruits such as apples, berries, citrus fruits, and pears.
- Try starting your day with a high-fiber cereal, or adding wheat bran, flaxseed, and fresh or dried fruit.
- Snack on fruit and vegetables. Choose recipes that feature these high-fiber ingredients, like veggie stir-fries or fruit salad.

# Nutritional Needs

Balanced and healthy eating is essential for good health. This handout includes some guidelines about the number of servings from each food group which an average adult should have to achieve healthy nutrition. Adolescent (age 12-18) nutritional needs are higher, to support growth.

*This information is general in nature and does not replace individual advice from a dietician.*

## Six Main Food Groups

Food can be divided into six main groups. For good health, it is important to eat foods from each food group every day. There are minimum recommended serves from each food group to ensure your mind and body get enough nutrients to be at your best.

The main food groups are:

- ◇ Breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles
- ◇ Vegetables & legumes
- ◇ Fruit
- ◇ Dairy, or dairy alternatives (e.g. soy products)
- ◇ Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts & pulses
- ◇ Added fats
- ◇ Occasional foods

## Breads, Cereals, Rice, Pasta, Noodles

The recommended intake is 4-6 serves per day for women, 5-7 per day for men. Some examples of 1 serve in this food group include:

- ◇ 2 slices bread or 1 medium bread roll
- ◇ 1 1/3 cups breakfast cereal flakes
- ◇ 1 cup cooked porridge
- ◇ 1 cup cooked pasta, rice or noodles
- ◇ 1 medium potato



## Vegetables & Legumes

The recommended intake is 5-7 serves per day for men and women. Some examples of 1 serve in this food group include:

- ◇ 1/2 cup cooked vegetables
- ◇ 1 cup salad
- ◇ 1/2 cup cooked lentils or chick peas



## Fruit

The recommended intake is 2-3 serves per day for women, 3-4 per day for men. Some examples of 1 serve in this food group include:

- ◇ 1 medium piece of fresh fruit (e.g., apple, pear)
- ◇ 2 small pieces (e.g., apricots, kiwi fruit)
- ◇ 1 cup fruit salad or canned fruit
- ◇ 4 dried apricots or 1 1/2 tbsp sultanas
- ◇ 1/2 cup fruit juice



## Dairy & Alternatives

The recommended intake is 3 serves per day for women and men. Some examples of 1 serve in this group are:

- ◇ 1 cup milk or soy milk (250ml)
- ◇ 1 tub (200g) yoghurt or 1 cup custard
- ◇ 2 slices (40g) cheese



## Meat, Fish, Poultry, Nuts & Pulses

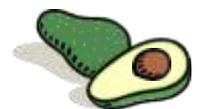
The recommended intake is 1-2 serves per day for men and women. Some examples of 1 serve in this food group include:

- ◇ 100g meat or chicken or 2 slices roast meat
- ◇ 95g canned tuna or salmon or 120g cooked fish
- ◇ 2 eggs
- ◇ 1 cup cooked beans (e.g., kidney, soy, chick peas)
- ◇ 150g hard tofu
- ◇ 1/3 cup nuts, 1/4 cup sunflower or sesame seeds

## Added Fats

The recommended intake is 1-2 serves per day for men and women. Some examples of 1 serve in this food group include:

- ◇ 1 tbsp margarine, oil, butter, cream or salad dressing
- ◇ 1/4 avocado (small) or 5 small olives
- ◇ 1 tsp mayonnaise



## Occasional Foods

These are to be enjoyed in moderation as part of any healthy eating pattern. Recommended intake is 1-2 serves per day for men and women. Examples include:

- ◇ 1 ice cream on a stick (or 1/2 scoops)
- ◇ 1 doughnut or 1 slice of cake
- ◇ 4 plain sweet biscuits or 2 chocolate biscuits
- ◇ 1 small cup of hot chips
- ◇ 1 fun size bag of potato crisps
- ◇ 25g chocolate or 40g lollies.

# Exercise Therapy

Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress. Virtually any form of exercise, from aerobics to yoga, can act as a stress reliever. If you're not an athlete or even if you're out of shape, you can still make a little exercise go a long way toward stress management. Exercise should be part of your stress management plan.

## Exercise and stress relief

Exercise increases your overall health and your sense of well-being, which puts more pep in your step every day. But exercise also has some direct stress-busting benefits.

- **It pumps up your endorphins.** Physical activity helps bump up the production of your brain's feel-good neurotransmitters, called endorphins. Although this function is often referred to as a runner's high, a rousing game of tennis or a nature hike also can contribute to this same feeling.
- **It's meditation in motion.** After a fast-paced game of racquetball or several laps in the pool, you'll often find that you've forgotten the day's irritations and concentrated only on your body's movements.

As you begin to regularly shed your daily tensions through movement and physical activity, you may find that this focus on a single task, and the resulting energy and optimism, can help you remain calm and clear in everything you do.

- **It improves your mood.** Regular exercise can increase self-confidence, it can relax you, and it can lower the symptoms associated with mild depression and anxiety. Exercise can also improve your sleep, which is often disrupted by stress, depression and anxiety. All of these exercise benefits can ease your stress levels and give you a sense of command over your body and your life.

### **Put exercise and stress relief to work for you**

A successful exercise program begins with a few simple steps.

- **Consult with your doctor.** If you haven't exercised for some time and you have health concerns, you may want to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.
- **Walk before you run.** Build up your fitness level gradually. Excitement about a new program can lead to overdoing it and possibly even injury.

For most healthy adults, the Department of Health and Human Services recommends getting at least 150 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity (such as brisk walking or swimming) or 75 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic activity (such as running). You also can do a combination of moderate and vigorous activity. Also, incorporate strength training exercises at least twice a week.

- **Do what you love.** Virtually any form of exercise or movement can increase your fitness level while decreasing your stress. The most important thing is to pick an activity that you enjoy. Examples include walking, stair climbing, jogging, bicycling, yoga, tai chi, gardening, weightlifting and swimming.
- **Pencil it in.** Although your schedule may necessitate a morning workout one day and an evening activity the next, carving out some time to move every day helps you make your exercise program an ongoing priority.

### **Stick with it**

Starting an exercise program is just the first step. Here are some tips for sticking with a new routine or reinvigorating a tired workout:

- **Set SMART goals.** Write down SMART goals — specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-limited goals.

If your primary goal is to reduce stress in your life and recharge your batteries, your specific goals might include committing to walking during your lunch hour three times a week or, if needed, finding a baby sitter to watch your children so that you can slip away to attend a cycling class.

- **Find a friend.** Knowing that someone is waiting for you to show up at the gym or the park can be a powerful incentive. Working out with a friend, co-worker or family member often brings a new level of motivation and commitment to your workouts.
- **Change up your routine.** If you've always been a competitive runner, take a look at other less competitive options that may help with stress reduction, such as Pilates or yoga classes. As an added bonus, these kinder, gentler workouts may enhance your running while also decreasing your stress.
- **Exercise in increments.** Even brief bouts of activity offer benefits. For instance, if you can't fit in one 30-minute walk, try three 10-minute walks instead. Interval training, which entails brief (60 to 90 seconds) bursts of intense activity at almost full effort, is being shown to be a safe, effective and efficient way of gaining many of the benefits of longer duration exercise. What's most important is making regular physical activity part of your lifestyle.

Whatever you do, don't think of exercise as just one more thing on your to-do list. Find an activity you enjoy — whether it's an active tennis match or a meditative meander down to a local park and back — and make it part of your regular routine. Any form of physical activity can help you unwind and become an important part of your approach to easing stress.



# sleep hygiene

## What is Sleep Hygiene?

'Sleep hygiene' is the term used to describe good sleep habits. Considerable research has gone into developing a set of guidelines and tips which are designed to enhance good sleeping, and there is much evidence to suggest that these strategies can provide long-term solutions to sleep difficulties.

There are many medications which are used to treat insomnia, but these tend to be only effective in the short-term. Ongoing use of sleeping pills may lead to dependence and interfere with developing good sleep habits independent of medication, thereby prolonging sleep difficulties. Talk to your health professional about what is right for you, but we recommend good sleep hygiene as an important part of treating insomnia, either with other strategies such as medication or cognitive therapy or alone.

## Sleep Hygiene Tips

- 1) **Get regular.** One of the best ways to train your body to sleep well is to go to bed and get up at more or less the same time every day, even on weekends and days off! This regular rhythm will make you feel better and will give your body something to work from.
- 2) **Sleep when sleepy.** Only try to sleep when you actually feel tired or sleepy, rather than spending too much time awake in bed.
- 3) **Get up & try again.** If you haven't been able to get to sleep after about 20 minutes or more, get up and do something calming or boring until you feel sleepy, then return to bed and try again. Sit quietly on the couch with the lights off (bright light will tell your brain that it is time to wake up), or read something boring like the phone book. Avoid doing anything that is too stimulating or interesting, as this will wake you up even more.
- 4) **Avoid caffeine & nicotine.** It is best to avoid consuming any caffeine (in coffee, tea, cola drinks, chocolate, and some medications) or nicotine (cigarettes) for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. These substances act as stimulants and interfere with the ability to fall asleep.
- 5) **Avoid alcohol.** It is also best to avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. Many people believe that alcohol is relaxing and helps them to get to sleep at first, but it actually interrupts the quality of sleep.
- 6) **Bed is for sleeping.** Try not to use your bed for anything other than sleeping and sex, so that your body comes to associate bed with sleep. If you use bed as a place to watch TV, eat, read, work on your laptop, pay bills, and other things, your body will not learn this connection.



7) **No naps.** It is best to avoid taking naps during the day, to make sure that you are tired at bedtime. If you can't make it through the day without a nap, make sure it is for less than an hour and before 3pm.



8) **Sleep rituals.** You can develop your own rituals of things to remind your body that it is time to sleep - some people find it useful to do relaxing stretches or breathing exercises for 15 minutes before bed each night, or sit calmly with a cup of caffeine-free tea.

9) **Bathtime.** Having a hot bath 1-2 hours before bedtime can be useful, as it will raise your body temperature, causing you to feel sleepy as your body temperature drops again. Research shows that sleepiness is associated with a drop in body temperature.

10) **No clock-watching.** Many people who struggle with sleep tend to watch the clock too much. Frequently checking the clock during the night can wake you up (especially if you turn on the light to read the time) and reinforces negative thoughts such as "Oh no, look how late it is, I'll never get to sleep" or "it's so early, I have only slept for 5 hours, this is terrible."

11) **Use a sleep diary.** This worksheet can be a useful way of making sure you have the right facts about your sleep, rather than making assumptions. Because a diary involves watching the clock (see point 10) it is a good idea to only use it for two weeks to get an idea of what is going and then perhaps two months down the track to see how you are progressing.



12) **Exercise.** Regular exercise is a good idea to help with good sleep, but try not to do strenuous exercise in the 4 hours before bedtime. Morning walks are a great way to start the day feeling refreshed!

13) **Eat right.** A healthy, balanced diet will help you to sleep well, but timing is important. Some people find that a very empty stomach at bedtime is distracting, so it can be useful to have a light snack, but a heavy meal soon before bed can also interrupt sleep. Some people recommend a warm glass of milk, which contains tryptophan, which acts as a natural sleep inducer.

14) **The right space.** It is very important that your bed and bedroom are quiet and comfortable for sleeping. A cooler room with enough blankets to stay warm is best, and make sure you have curtains or an eyemask to block out early morning light and earplugs if there is noise outside your room.

15) **Keep daytime routine the same.** Even if you have a bad night sleep and are tired it is important that you try to keep your daytime activities the same as you had planned. That is, don't avoid activities because you feel tired. This can reinforce the insomnia.

# Insomnia and Sleeping

## What is Insomnia?

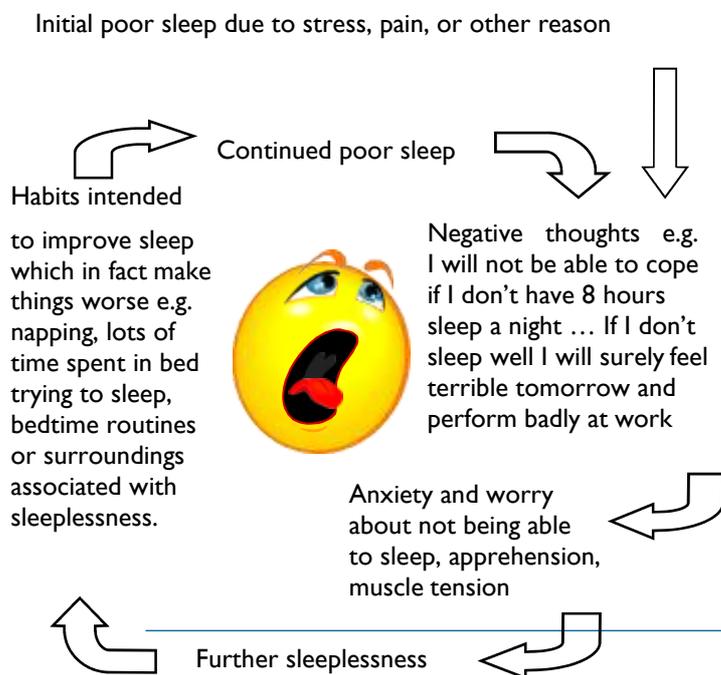
Primary insomnia is persistent problems with sleep, lasting for more than one month, and may include:

- Difficulty falling asleep - also known as onset insomnia
- Waking up on and off during the night - also known as middle insomnia
- Waking up very early and not returning to sleep
- Unsatisfactory sleep quality

Insomnia is the most common mental health complaint, affecting up to 30% of adults, and may require specific treatment even when it occurs as part of another disorder (e.g. depression, generalized anxiety disorder, post traumatic stress disorder).

## Insomnia and the Role of Thinking

The onset of insomnia may be due to a range of factors such as stress, pain or many other reasons, but it is often quite different factors which keep the problem going. Negative thoughts about sleep can play a very important role in maintaining sleep problems, as shown in 'The Vicious Cycle of Insomnia' below:



This diagram shows that negative thoughts about getting to sleep, quality of sleep, and consequences of poor sleep can actually increase the chances of having poor sleep. It is as though these negative thoughts become a self-fulfilling prophecy, and they can get in the way of returning to regular, good sleep habits. These negative thoughts can occur during the day and the night.

## Types of Negative Thoughts About Sleep



- 1) Assuming the worst about the meaning or cause of sleep problems. For example, someone who thinks "I haven't slept well this past week, it must mean that I have lost the ability to sleep" is likely to feel much more distressed than someone who thinks "I haven't slept well this past week - I might be stressed about something at work or at home, I should address it."
- 2) Blaming everything on sleep is another common thinking trap. It is true that poor sleep can affect mood, concentration, memory and work performance, but sleep is not the only cause of problems in these areas. People with insomnia tend to assume that their sleep problems are the cause of everything that goes wrong with the day.
- 3) Unrealistic expectations about how much sleep is needed can make people feel worse about problems with sleeping. People who sleep poorly tend to hold a very strong belief that everyone requires 8 hours of sleep per night to function well. In fact, people vary greatly in terms of how much sleep they need. Some people cope quite well on 4-5 hours per night, while others need 9-10. Setting strict rules or targets for your sleep duration will increase performance anxiety and interfere with the process of falling asleep.
- 4) Unhelpful thinking styles such as catastrophising, black & white thinking, overgeneralization, and selective attention can also contribute to maintaining sleep problems. For example, people with sleep problems tend to remember the times they slept poorly but forget the instances of good sleep, or will notice every little body sensation when trying to get to sleep. People with insomnia also tend to classify a night's sleep as either "great" or "terrible" without leaving room for "ok" and "good enough."

## Challenging Negative Thoughts

You can use the Thought Diary process, described in other information sheets to challenge negative thoughts about sleep. Research has shown that negative thinking is connected to negative emotions and behavior, and so healthy thinking is a very important part of healthy sleeping. Thought Diaries are a useful way of identifying your negative thoughts about sleep and the feelings and behaviors associated with these thoughts, and then generating more helpful and balanced ways of thinking.



