

Stress Proofing Yourself

Physical Fitness

- It's easier to manage stress when you're physically fit
- Exercise and stretch throughout the day
- Huffing/puffing exercise will help you to generate endorphins, which lift mood

Humour

- Smile - when you smile your brain automatically produces endorphins - so smile
- Laughter produces even more endorphins
- Surround yourself with positive imprints - draw a ☺ to make you smile
- Play funny games, jokes, read cartoons and books , watch videos
- Start a humour box at work - collect cartoons, jokes and props, which help you laugh.
- Laugh on the way home about one funny thing of the day

Separate Home From Work

- Leave unfinished work at work
- Leave work while you still have energy - otherwise you will grind yourself to a standstill
- Never work in bed. The bedroom should be a place of fun and relaxation
- Have a shower and change your clothes when you get home from work - it will help to separate work them
- If work is crowding your thoughts when you want to get rest then get your mind absorbed into something else - a good book, movie, conversation, try juggling to give total concentrated effort

Make Life Easier On Yourself

- Carry things in a backpack or trolley rather than loading yourself with a heavy bag
- Wear comfortable clothes - buy the right size - (especially shoes and trousers), wear low heels
- Pay someone to clean the house, mow the lawns or do things you don't have time to do
- If things don't work - fix them or throw them out

Boost Your Immune System

- Change your perception of what is happening around you by changing the words you use to describe events. Feel the difference between:
I'm depressed and I'm feeling a bit down
I'm stressed and I'm challenged
- In a "difficult" situation tell yourself: "That's interesting" and notice the difference
- Physical touch will boost our immune system, have a massage, stroke the cat

Develop Support Networks

- Take time out to nurture your relationships - go for walks, do things together, welcome them home.
- You don't have to go through life alone - share the problems and the success with other trusted people. Be ready to admit that you need help.

Change Patterns of Beliefs

- Take a good look at your beliefs and challenge them. They often feel comfortable because we've had them a long time but they're not always true
- Look at some of the beliefs you have about yourself and your expectations and see if they're really relevant: "I've always been like that"
"It's easier to do it myself"
"No pain, no gain"
"Life wasn't meant to be easy"
- Change the beliefs you want to change by changing your thoughts, mixing with positive people, listening to motivational tapes

Nutrition

- Eat breakfast. Eat from the food pyramid
- Be especially careful to eat nourishing food when you're under a lot of stress

Give Yourself Bonuses

- Send yourself flowers, buy in take-always, go to a movie

Always Have a Purpose in Life

- If you're not happy with something, do something about it
- Change one thing in your life at a time and stick to it for six weeks to set a pattern, which will last for a long time. The most long-term changes are the ones we slowly absorb into our life.

Set Boundaries

- Learn to say 'no'
- Decide how much time you're going to give and stick with that - "when I'm on, I'm on, and when I'm off, I'm off"

10 Commandments for Reducing Stress

1. Thou shalt not be perfect, or even try to be.
2. Thou shalt not try to be all things to all people.
3. Thou shalt leave things undone that ought to be undone.
4. Thou shalt not spread thyself too thin.
5. Thou shalt learn to say "No".
6. Thou shalt schedule time for thyself, and for thy supportive network.
7. Thou shalt switch off and do nothing regularly.
8. Thou shalt be boring, untidy, inelegant and unattractive at time.
9. Thou shalt not even feel guilty.
10. Especially thou shalt not be thine own worst enemy, but be thy best friend.