



CARE's WorkLife Solutions

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Managing Stress

Stress happens. In fact, it *should* happen because stress can motivate us to accomplish both the mundane tasks of everyday living and the higher aims and personal goals we each set for ourselves.

But too much stress can be deadly, truly. The most stressed among us face physical ailments, such as heart disease, stomach problems, migraines and other ailments. Stress also can impact our relationships with loved ones and impair our ability to be our best at work and at home.

To best manage stress, health experts ask that we first look at the ways we might be inviting stress into our lives. Answer the following questions honestly —

Do you stress yourself out by:

- Not looking after your health?
- Being too hard on yourself?
- Not taking time out for yourself?
- Doing things you don't enjoy doing?
- Having unrealistic expectations of yourself?
- Not defining your priorities or not having life goals?

A 'yes' answer to any of these questions means you yourself may be a chief cause of the stress in your life — but that's OK, you *can* change and you *can* learn new ways to lead a less-stressed life. Here are some techniques offered by the staff at CARE's WorkLife Solutions:

- Laugh more. Laughter has an aerobic effect, which is healthy. It also releases endorphins into the body, which are chemicals that naturally allow us to better cope with stress.
- Watch less TV. Poor time management may lead to greater stress. The average American watches 24 hours of TV a week! That's a full day! By watching less TV, you'll increase the number of productive hours you have in a week.
- Don't procrastinate. There are two reasons why we procrastinate, say the researchers: we either don't have enough information or we are afraid of the results. But putting something off can be stressful. Explore what you need to finish a project and take to it!