



## 5 Ways to Prevent Stress Buildup

There's no avoiding the stress of everyday life. Schoolwork, responsibilities at home, busy schedules, other people's expectations, disappointments, deadlines, social drama: all of these can create tension.

Everyday stressors have a way of piling up if we don't keep them in check. Adding these 5 simple actions to your regular routine can help you avoid that "bogged down by stress" feeling. The key word is "routine." You need to make sure you keep doing these to enjoy the benefits:

**1. Balance responsibilities (like schoolwork) with activities you enjoy (like relaxing or spending time with friends).** It's all about balance: all work and no play is bad. But if your schedule is so crammed with activities that there's no time for homework, that'll stress you out too.

**2. Manage responsibilities.** Use a calendar or planning app to keep track of assignments, chores, practices, and other obligations. Of course, planning is no good if you don't actually do what you plan: Managing stress also means regular studying, keeping on top of assignments, and overcoming procrastination. Take time to reflect a bit every day and think about how things are going. What do you need to work on? Do? Make time for?

**3. Eat healthy foods.** What you eat affects your mood, energy, and stress level. Eating healthy doesn't mean avoiding all treats — it goes back to that balance thing again. It's OK to treat yourself to ice cream occasionally if you ate a salad or turkey on whole wheat for lunch. But if ice cream and sweets are your main source of fuel, you're likely to crash or feel cranky — and stressed!

**4. Get proper sleep.** This may seem like a no-brainer. After all, who doesn't love to sleep? But getting the right amount of sleep is actually something we need to focus on because it's easy to let homework, talking to friends, or binge watching get in the way of sleep — no matter how much we want to catch those ZZZs.

**5. Make time to exercise every day.** It's hard to feel anxious when you're taking deep breaths on a run, feeling the rush of a downhill bike ride, or playing a pickup game with friends. Exercise doesn't just take our mind off of stress; it releases chemicals in our brains that make us feel better.

Learning to manage stress means building coping skills that allow you to take everyday challenges in stride. It's about keeping problems in perspective instead of ignoring them, and learning what to work on and what to let go of.

## Tools for Stress Management in Children & Adolescents

### Online Resources/Apps:

- **Mindfulness for Children, Meditation for Kids** <http://mindful-app.com> - App available on iTunes and Google Play.
- **Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame Street** - App available on iTunes and Google Play. Age 4+. Bilingual (English and Spanish) app that helps children learn to solve problems, by helping the monster solve everyday challenges.
- **Settle Your Glitter** - App available on iTunes and Google Play. Age 4+. Deep breathing with Puffy the Pufferfish to focus attention.
- **Super Stretch Yoga** - App available on iTunes. Age 4+. Yoga poses, guided by Superstretch taught with video, animation, music and real kids.
- **Breathing Bubbles** - App available on iTunes and Google Play. Age 5+. It helps kids practice releasing worries and focusing on good feelings.
- **Headspace** - App available on iTunes and Google Play. All ages. Meditation made simple.
- **Mandala Memory** - App available on iTunes. Age 5+. A memory game with beautiful patterns that can be used for children and adults.
- **Wellbeyond Meditation for Kids** - App available on iTunes. Age 7+. Stop, breathe, reflect with this easy introduction to guided meditation.
- **Scape** - iPad only. Age 8+. Music app that offers, original, endless listening opportunities.
- **Stop, Breathe & Think**. App available on iTunes and Google Play. Age 10+. A tool that guides meditation and promotes compassion.
- **TeensHealth from Nemours** - <http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/your-mind/>
- **KidsHealth from Nemours for Kids** - <http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/feeling/>
- **KidsHealth from Nemours for Parents** - <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/emotions/> Information for parents to support children through life stressors like divorce and preparing for new siblings.
- **TeenHealth from Nemours Stress and Coping Center** - <http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/center/stress-center.html?WT.ac=ctg#catproblems>  
Bilingual (Spanish and English) information on stress and how to cope with it.

### Community Resources:

- Hunterdon Prevention Resources: <http://hunterdonprevention.com/about-us>
- Family Support Organization: <http://fso-hsw.org/>
- 2ND Floor Youth Helpline: 1-888-222-2228 [www.2ndfloor.org](http://www.2ndfloor.org); funded by DCF, serves all youth and young adults in New Jersey. Youth who call the hotline receive assistance with daily life challenges by professional staff and trained volunteers. 2ND Floor is accredited by the American Association of Suicidology.
- Teen Mental Health: <http://teenmentalhealth.org/>
- Hunterdon Behavioral Health
  - 908-788-6401
  - Groups including: Coping Skills Group, OCD group, ADHD group, Children's Divorce Group, Adolescent Coping Skills Group, Take Back Control the Mindful Way

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