Each day should have a clearly marked emergency exit sign.

Dr. SunWolf
What is Stress
Flight or Fight

- When faced with a challenge or a threat, your body activates resources to protect you - to either get away as fast as you can, or fight.

- Our fight-or-flight response is our body's sympathetic nervous system reacting to a stressful event. Our body produces larger quantities of the chemicals cortisol, adrenaline and noradrenaline - to help protect us in a dangerous or challenging situation.
When we are stressed....

- Blood pressure rises
- Breathing becomes more rapid
- Digestive system slows down
- Heart rate (pulse) rises
- Immune system goes down
- Muscles become tense
- Poor sleep (heightened state of alertness/arousal)
Good for this.....
Not so helpful for this....
Health Issues

- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Heart Disease
- Auto Immune Disease
- Anxiety
- Depression

Just to name a few......
Unhelpful responses to stress

- Excessive alcohol
- Denying the problem
- Taking drugs
- Overeating
- Smoking
- Angry behaviour/taking it out on others
Recognise your warning signs

- How do you know you are stressed?
The basics...

- Nutritional diet
- Exercise
- Sleep hygiene
- Limit caffeine and sugar
- Environmental factors, e.g. lighting, noise
The five ‘A’s

- Avoid
- Alter
- Accept
- Adapt
- Adopt
Avoid

- Learn how to say “no” – Know your limits and stick to them
- Avoid people who stress you out
- Take control of your environment – If the evening news makes you anxious, turn the TV off.
- Avoid hot-button topics – If you repeatedly argue about the same subject with the same people, stop bringing it up or excuse yourself when it’s the topic of discussion
Alter

- **Express** your feelings instead of bottling them up. If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way.

- Be willing to **compromise**. When you ask someone to change their behaviour, be willing to do the same.

- Be more **assertive**. Deal with problems head on.

- **Manage your time** better. When you’re stretched too thin and running behind, it’s hard to stay calm and focused.
Adapt

- **Reframe problems.** Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. When stress is getting you down, take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life, including your own positive qualities and gifts.

- **Look at the big picture.** Take perspective of the stressful situation. Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.

- **Adjust your standards.** Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others, and learn to be okay with “good enough.”

- **Adjust Your Attitude.** Eliminate words such as "always," "never," "should," and "must." These are tell-tale marks of self-defeating thoughts.
Accept

- **Don’t try to control the uncontrollable.** Many things in life are beyond our control—particularly the behaviour of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems.

- **Look for the upside.** When facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth.

- **Learn to forgive.** Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes. Let go of anger and resentments. Free yourself from negative energy by forgiving and moving on.
Adopt.. (a healthy lifestyle)
Setting Boundaries

No!
When to say “No”

- **Focus on what matters most.** Examine your current obligations and overall priorities before making any new commitments. Ask yourself if the new commitment is important to you. If it's something you feel strongly about, by all means do it. If not, take a pass.

- **Weigh the yes-to-stress ratio.** Is the new activity you're considering a short- or long-term commitment? Don't say yes if it will mean months of added stress. Instead, look for other ways to pitch in.

- **Take guilt out of the equation.** Don't agree to a request you would rather decline because of feelings of guilt or obligation. Doing so will likely lead to additional stress and resentment.

- **Sleep on it.** Before you respond, take a day to think about.
How to say “No”

- **Be brief.** State your reason for refusing the request, but don't go on about it. Avoid elaborate justifications or explanations.

- **Be honest.** As much as you can don't fabricate reasons to get out of an obligation.

- **Be respectful.**

- **Be ready to repeat.** You may find it necessary to refuse a request several times before the other person accepts your response. When that happens, just hit the replay button. Calmly repeat your no, with or without your original rationale, as needed.
Examples

- I can’t commit to this as I have other priorities at the moment.

- This doesn’t meet my needs now but I’ll be sure to keep you in mind.

- I’m not the best person to help on this. Why don’t you try X?

- No, I can’t.
No-one said it would be easy....

Saying ‘no’ won't be easy if you're used to saying ‘yes’ all the time.
Learning to say ‘no’ is an important part of simplifying your life and managing your stress.
With practice, you may find saying ‘no’ gets easier.
Time Management

To DO...

- have a list
- use the list
- love the list
- be the list

©jgoode
Time Management

- Adjust your attitude
- Be organized
- Follow a routine
- Write down your goals
- Be selective
- Prioritize
- Give yourself extra time
- Track what you do
- Schedule downtime
Stress Management at Work

- **Clean up your act** If you’re always running late, set your clocks and watches fast and give yourself extra time. If your desk is a mess, file and throw away the clutter, just knowing where everything is saves time and cuts stress.

- **Don’t try to control** the uncontrollable. Many things at work are beyond our control— particularly the behaviour of other people.

- **Delegate** responsibility. Let go of the desire to control or oversee every little step.

- Plan regular **breaks**.

- **Resist** perfectionism.

- Develop the capacity to meet challenges with **humour**.
If your teeth are clenched and your fists are clenched, your lifespan is probably clenched.

~ Terri Guillemets
Mindfulness

If you let cloudy water settle, it will become clear. If you let your upset mind settle, your course will also become clear.

From Buddha’s Little Instruction Book (Kornfield: Bantum Books, 1994)

Mind Full, or Mindful?
Mindfulness

- Bringing one’s complete attention to the present experience on a moment-to-moment basis
- To be fully present, here and now
- To become more connected to yourself, to others and to the world around you
- To become less disturbed by and less reactive to unpleasant experiences
Exercises

One Minute of Mindfulness

- Take a moment right now to try this. Check your watch and note the time. For the next 60 seconds your task is to focus all your attention on your breathing. It’s just for one minute, but it can seem like an eternity. Leave your eyes open and breathe normally. Be ready to catch your mind from wandering off (because it will) and return your attention to your breath whenever it does so.
Conscious Observation

Pick up an object that you have lying around. Any mundane everyday object will do...a coffee cup or a pen for example.

Hold it in your hands and allow your attention to be fully absorbed by the object.

Observe it. Don’t assess it, or think about it, or study it intellectually. Just observe it for what it is.
Mindful eating

- This involves sitting down at a table and eating a meal without engaging in any other activities - no newspaper, TV, talking etc.

- Now eat your meal paying full attention to which piece of food you select to eat, how it looks, smells, how you cut the food, the muscles you use, the taste and texture as you chew slowly.

- Food may taste different when eaten in this way and be more filling. It is also very good for the digestion.
Relaxation Response

- Your personal ability to make your body release chemicals and brain signals that make your muscles and organs slow down and increases blood flow to the brain.
- Increase energy, decrease fatigue and arousal, lowers stress hormone levels and lowers blood pressure.
Techniques

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (tense & relax)
- Visual Imagery
- Deep Breathing
- Meditation
- Yoga
- Biofeedback
Breathe
How beautiful it is to do nothing, and then to rest afterward.  ~Spanish Proverb