



UICS NEWS

Stress management is a topic that is discussed a lot. Most people have heard the basic strategies involved in stress management so many times that it can become easy to tune it all out like white noise. Eat healthy, get a good night's sleep, exercise, spend time with friends and family, take time to relax...*yeah, yeah, heard it all before.*

So, why, then, are so many people still struggling with stress? Is it because the strategies don't work? Not likely – those who use the time-tested strategies know they work. For many people, the issue is that even though they've heard the strategies, they aren't actually incorporating them into their lives.

If you fall into this category, a useful way to bring stress management into your life is to make it part of your everyday routine. To do this, it is a good idea to focus on making goals that are manageable and sustainable; not overly-ambitious. It's better to set a goal of 5 push-ups a day, and stick to it, than to set a goal of 100 push-ups a day, and then drop it after a week!

As always, please know that the staff of UICS is here to help you deal with any difficulties you might be facing, and to support you with meeting whatever goals you have set for yourself.

Graham Walker, MA, RCC
UICS Counsellor



"You devote 50% of your energy to your career, 50% to your children and 50% to your marriage. I think I see the problem..."

The Four A's of Stress Management

#1: **Avoid unnecessary stress**

Not all stress can be avoided, and it's not healthy to avoid a situation that needs to be addressed. You may be surprised, however, by the number of stressors in your life that you can eliminate.

#2: **Alter the situation**

If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Figure out what you can do to change things so the problem doesn't present itself in the future. Often, this involves changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life.

#3: **Adapt to the stressor**

If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

#4: **Accept the things you can't change**

Some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can't prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it's easier than railing against a situation you can't change.

- Helpguide.org

"The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another."

- William James

"It's not stress that kills us, it is our reaction to it."

- Hans Selye

Welcome New Members

We are pleased to welcome the employees and family members of Eatmore Sprouts and Greens Ltd, Vancouver Island Community Connections Inc., and Playtime Community Gaming Centre in Campbell River.

Breathing Meditation for Stress Relief

With its focus on full, cleansing breaths, deep breathing is a simple, yet powerful, relaxation technique. It's easy to learn, can be practiced almost anywhere, and provides a quick way to get your stress levels in check.

The key to deep breathing is to breathe deeply from the abdomen, getting as much fresh air as possible in your lungs. When you take deep breaths from the abdomen, rather than shallow breaths from your upper chest, you inhale more oxygen. The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath, and anxious you feel.

- Sit comfortably with your back straight. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- Breathe in through your nose. The hand on your stomach should rise. The hand on your chest should move very little.
- Exhale through your mouth, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles. The hand on your stomach should move in as you exhale, but your other hand should move very little.
- Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count slowly as you exhale.

Start a Stress Journal

A stress journal can help you identify the regular stressors in your life and the way you deal with them. Each time you feel stressed, keep track of it in your journal. As you keep a daily log, you will begin to see patterns and common themes. Write down:

- What caused your stress (make a guess if you're unsure)
- How you felt, both physically and emotionally
- How you acted in response
- What you did to make yourself feel better

- Helpguide.org

3 Healthy Habits For Success

Proper nutrition doesn't just help you stay fit and healthy, it also helps you stay focused and energized during the day.

1. Don't skip breakfast: you may begin to lose focus and energy within three hours. A high protein breakfast gives your body a sustainable source of fuel to keep you going throughout the day. Since you don't excrete insulin after eating protein, you stay focused and energized for five to six hours and experience fewer sugar cravings.

2. Eat a 4 p.m. snack: Having a snack a few hours after lunch sustains your energy level through the end of the day. Snacking on apple slices dipped in almond butter provides protein and fat needed for sustained energy.

3 Get a good night's rest: Overeating at dinner or snacking late into the night often leads to disjointed sleep, since your body is working hard to digest food. Have a light meal and stop eating three hours before bedtime. Writing down the three best things about your day--and three things you plan to do tomorrow--will help to induce a feeling of calm before bedtime.

by Nadine Heintz

Couple's Corner



The 5 Love Languages

One way to improve relationships is to give attention to the different ways that love can be expressed. One popular perspective states that there are five basic love languages, and each person has a primary love language that we must learn to speak if we want that person to feel loved.

• Words of Affirmation

If your partner's primary love language is words of affirmation, your spoken praise and appreciation will fall like rain on parched soil. Before long, you will see new life sprouting in your relationship as your partner responds to your words of love.

• Acts of Service

Do you remember the old saying, "Actions speak louder than words"? For some people, that is particularly true of love. If acts of service is your partner's primary love language, nothing will speak more deeply to him or her emotionally than simple acts of service.

• Receiving Gifts

If you're in a relationship with someone whose primary love language is gift giving, you will make your partner feel loved and treasured by giving gifts on birthdays, holidays, anniversaries and "no occasion" days. The gifts need not be expensive or elaborate; it's the thought that counts. Little things mean a lot to a person whose primary love language is receiving gifts.

• Quality Time

If your partner's love language is quality time, giving him or her your undivided attention is one of the best ways you can show your love. To your partner, 20 minutes of your undivided attention – listening and conversing – is like a 20-minute refill of his or her love tank.

• Physical Touch

In marriage, the love language of physical touch includes everything from putting a hand on your mate's shoulder as you walk by, touching his or her leg as you're driving together, and holding hands while you're walking to kissing, embracing and sexual intercourse. If physical touch is your partner's primary love language, nothing communicates love more clearly than for you to take the initiative to reach out and touch your mate.

By Gary Chapman



"I'm prescribing exercise. Think of it as a stress pill that takes 30 minutes to swallow."
GLASBERGEN