



CareHere!

COPING WITH STRESS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

STRESS IS A STATE OF MENTAL TENSION AND WORRY CAUSED BY PROBLEMS IN YOUR LIFE, WORK, ETC.

Your personal perception determines whether a situation is stressful or not. In other words, it's the perception you hold about the stress and your ability to cope.

STRESS COMES IN TWO GENERAL FORMS

- **Acute stress** is short-lived and doesn't happen all the time. Think of a fender bender or a deadline at work. Short-lived stress can be healthy, as it helps us to adapt to changes and increases performance in some situations, such as a presentation.
- **Chronic stress** occurs over an extended period of time. Think of ongoing financial troubles, problems at work and home. During these times, stress hormones are continuously released into the body.

Unfortunately, ongoing chronic stress can be damaging to many bodily systems including the digestive, reproductive, immune and cardiovascular systems. Thankfully, a variety of coping skills can be used to reduce the effect of stress on the body, allowing you to deal with stress more easily. Coping skills can be used anytime, at work and at home before entering a stressful situation, as well as during the stressful feeling. With practice, coping skills become easier to use and have a stronger effect on stress.

COPING SKILLS

- **Behavioral Coping Skills** - Use a change in behavior to lessen or remove stress. Actions such as eliminating clutter, keeping a budget, and keeping an ongoing list of tasks can greatly reduce stress.
- **Cognitive Coping Skills** - Involve a change in thoughts to lessen or remove stress. Examples include confronting procrastination, classifying stressors, and identifying friends and family to spend quality time with while "leaving work at work".
- **Relaxation Coping Skills** - Include exercises that reduce the physical effect of stress, such as massage, deep breathing, yoga and meditation.

Let's Practice: The 24 Second Stress Buster

- Prepare by placing yourself in a comfortable position in your chair and closing your eyes.
- Breathe in slowly through your nose to the count of 6, and hold your breath to the count of 6.
- Release your breath through your mouth to the count of 6.
- Sit quietly and go to a positive mental place to the count of 6.