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Have you been feeling stressed? You are not alone. From time to time, we're bound to feel stress from work, family, finances, social situations, or illness. The good news is that you can reduce your stress.

## WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is your body's response to change. Stress can be physical, chemical, or emotional. Physical and chemical causes of stress can include trauma, infections, toxins, illnesses and injuries. Emotional causes of stress can include worrying about money, a loved one's illness, retirement, or experiencing an emotionally devastating event, such as the death of a spouse, or being fired from your job.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Stress can be affecting you without you being aware of it. Many of the physical signs and symptoms of stress are also signs and symptoms of illness. That is why it is important to discuss any of these symptoms with your doctor. A few of the many physical signs of stress include:

- Sleep disturbances
- Stomach Ache or diarrhea
- Tension or migraine headaches
- Greater susceptibility to colds and other infections
- Fatigue
- High blood pressure
- Back, shoulders or neck pain
- Skin problems (hives, eczema, psoriasis)

As with physical symptoms, emotional symptoms can be caused by conditions other than stress as well, and it is important to find out if they are stress related or not.

Some of the emotional signs and symptoms of stress include:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Trouble concentrating
- Feeling out of control
- Irritability

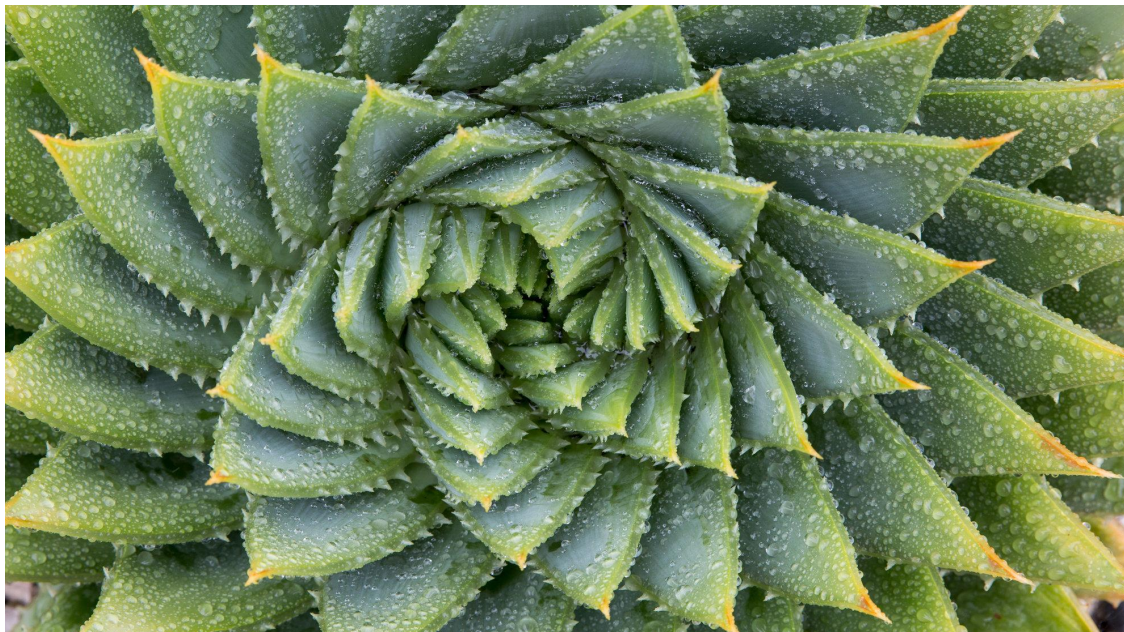


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Stress Management is the ability to maintain control when situations, people, and events make excessive demands on you. There are some things you can do to manage stress or try to reduce the stress in your life. For example: Get regular exercise, find a certified personal trainer, set reasonable workout goals, and eat a diet rich in a variety of whole grains, vegetables, and fruits.

- Avoid excessive alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco.
- Learn to say no. Don't promise too much.
- Identify sources of stress and try to minimize your exposure to them or avoid them altogether.
- Change how you respond to difficult situations. Be positive, not negative.
- Humor is a very effective mechanism for coping with stress. Try to keep a sense of humor when dealing with difficult situations.
- Utilize the positive groups to strengthen or establish a support network.

If you think that you would benefit from help, either in identifying the things that are causing your stress, or in learning techniques to help you relax, talk to your physician or other healthcare practitioner. The process of learning to control stress is life-long, and will not only contribute to better health, but a greater ability to succeed in life.



<https://www.health.com/stress/relaxing-images-to-destress>

Adapted from: <https://www.ymcaofselma.org/stress-management>