

# Top Ways to Keep Healthy Under Stress



**Reduce caffeine intake.** Studies have shown that caffeine can increase levels of stress hormones, and these increases may persist all day long and up to bedtime.



**Take along some healthy food.** If you've got some healthy food with you (fruit, bagels, and yogurt can be bought quickly nearly everywhere) you won't suffer the consequences of missed meals and fat-laden fast food binges.



**Don't "treat" stress symptoms.** Don't fall victim to the trap of "treating" your tiredness, lack of energy, anxiety, or worries with alcohol, sedatives, stimulants, nicotine, or other substances. You'll only worsen the stress symptoms in the long run.



**Evaluate dietary supplements carefully.** Not everyone under stress needs supplemental vitamins and minerals. Take a look at your diet and ask your doctor if you would benefit from dietary supplements if you're unsure. More is not necessarily better, and get medical advice before trying any unconventional "stress cures."



**Eat breakfast.** Even if you're running out the door late for your first meeting, grab a bite to eat. A busy schedule requires energy, and stress amplifies our need for adequate fuel. A bonus is that your mood will improve too.



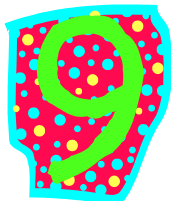
**Drink water.** Eight glasses per day is the recommended amount, but having water on your desk or in your bag to sip all day is a practical way to maintain healthy hydration. Sipping water will also give you something to do when nervous, and this healthy practice might help you resist the urge for caffeine or junk food.



**Make sleep a priority.** Chances are, your personal time is very limited if your day is packed with stress. Prioritize your need for sleep and recognize sleep for the valuable rejuvenation time it provides. You may have to sacrifice social events or household chores, but don't skimp on sleep.



**Don't fall prey to denial.** If you are experiencing serious psychological or physical symptoms, don't just write them off as "due to stress." It's better to detect and diagnose problems early when they are most treatable and manageable. Don't let a stressful lifestyle blind your awareness of your body and its performance.



**Walk somewhere each day.** While you might not have time for a workout, you can emphasize walking in your daily schedule. Just 10-15 minutes can help clear your head and improve your mood. Walking can be integrated into almost any type of schedule and needn't be planned in advance. Just seize the opportunities for a walk (even better, in fresh air) when they arise.



**Schedule medical and dental appointments.** Regular checkups and health screenings are an absolute must for those with stressful lifestyles. Make appointments well in advance and enter them into your planner so you'll be able to plan your schedule around these appointments.