

EFFECTIVE SELF-CARE



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You will never become so good at taking care of yourself that you lead a stress-free life. However, there is much you can do to help alleviate stress reactions.

No single technique will relieve all your stress, but paying attention to the following three areas of self-care may build up your *hardiness* (your ability to handle more stress with less distress) and your *resilience* (your ability to “bounce back” after particularly stressful or traumatic events).

Physical

- Regular exercise
- Sleep
- Healthy eating
- Drinking enough water
- Humor and laughter
- Limit your consumption of alcohol
- Pilates or yoga
- Relaxation techniques (such as progressive muscle relaxation, diaphragmatic breathing, visualization and meditation)
- Massage, whirlpool, sauna
- Repetitive activities (such as cross-stitching, walking, quilting, drawing and cooking)

Emotional and relational

- Nurturing relationships
- Contact with home/friends through email, phone, tapes
- Talking
- Humor
- Ongoing support group
- Reflection: journaling, writing, meditating, poetry
- Creative activity such as drawing, sculpting, cooking, painting and photography
- Movies, books, music
- Having balanced priorities
- Understanding traumatic stress and have realistic expectations
- Counseling

Spiritual

- Knowing your values: Where do you tend to find meaning and purpose in life?
- Participating in a community of meaning and purpose
- Regular times of prayer, reading, meditation
- Spiritually meaningful conversations
- Singing or listening to meaningful music
- Contact with religious leaders or inspiring individuals
- Time with art, nature or music
- Solitude