

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

MANAGING STRESS

Containing stress can help improve your quality of life.

You probably know that your physical and mental health can be harmed when stress levels get out of control. And, when stress accumulates and isn't relieved for an extended period, true burnout can result. No one wants to go there if they can help it.

Fortunately, you can find stress management techniques that work best for you. It may take practice to adopt new stress busters, but the effort will be worth it.

Here are some ideas to consider for keeping the stress of a fast-paced modern life at bay.

- **Prioritize self-care.** Remember to focus on the building blocks of good self-care such as eating nutritious food, getting adequate rest, exercising, and engaging in healthy stress relieving practices such as meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga, deep breathing, and writing your thoughts in a stress journal. Such activities can boost your resilience and keep stress from gaining a foothold.
- **Talk things out.** If you're feeling beaten down by life, it's important to not self-isolate—despite the temptation to do so. Instead, talk with someone who can listen and empathize with your situation. Sharing your struggle can help calm the nervous system and reduce stress. If you can't find relief, arrange some counseling time with a mental health professional through EAP.
- **Set more limits.** Many accomplished people get in the habit of trying to help and doing too much. However, there's no harm in telling others that, at present, you're feeling tired and can't take on new tasks. This will give you more time to focus on your own wellness.
- **Build in more balance.** If you feel like you're neglecting something that is important to you, make sure to seek meaning and satisfaction in your personal life—via your family, friends, creative hobbies, or spiritual practice. Increase your involvement with the elements of life that bring you joy.
- **Take the time off you've earned.** If you've noticed the accumulation of excessive stress over time, take the basic yet often-needed step of scheduling time off. Taking in new physical and psychological landscapes refreshes the mind. If you can't get away, do brief staycations with self-soothing activities.

