

Health and Wellness Tips

Americans Need Ways To Manage Their Stress

(NAPSA)—Relax. While you may have a lot to worry about, there are a few easy ways to reduce the stress of demanding, hectic schedules, work and family responsibilities. Fortunately, taking the right steps can reduce stress overload and improve your health.

“Stress overload harms the body and can eventually lead to cardiovascular, immune and digestive problems, as well as depression, anxiety and other mental health concerns,” said Douglas MacKay, N.D., vice president scientific and regulatory affairs, Council for Responsible Nutrition. “Incorporating relaxation techniques into our everyday lives is essential for overall health and wellness.”

Dr. MacKay offers these tips to help manage stress levels and improve your overall health:

1. Work your mind and your body. Activities such as meditation and yoga have been known to decrease stress levels. According to the Mayo Clinic, exercise can decrease the production of stress hormones and counteract the body’s natural stress responses by increasing endorphins and improving your mood.

2. Do a diet assessment. Think about incorporating more foods with complex carbohydrates such as whole grains, oats and brown rice, which can increase serotonin levels and help keep you calm.

3. Consider botanicals. Some plants, such as chamomile, lavender and lemon balm (from the mint family), are known for their relaxing tendencies. In fact, research has shown that the botanical supplement *Rhodiola rosea* may improve physical endurance and mental performance and reduces stress-induced fatigue in humans. Valerian,



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another botanical supplement, has been known to help manage stress efficiently by promoting healthy sleep patterns. These dietary supplements can be found in many pharmacies and grocery or health food stores, or through direct marketing companies.

4. Please your nose. Smells that are enjoyable to your olfactory system (or sense of smell) often have a relaxing or calming effect, especially if they evoke pleasant memories.

5. Keep your body’s nutrients in check. Excess stress depletes the body of essential B vitamins that are required to keep the nervous system healthy. B vitamins work as a team to maintain healthy brain and nerve cells and help with the production of important neurotransmitters in the brain that help promote relaxation. Taking a “B-complex” vitamin can provide extra nutritional support during times of stress.

6. Just breathe. And breathe deeply. Long deep breaths are associated with relaxation while rapid bursts are a symptom of stress. Try 10 deep breaths in a row.

For more information, visit www.crnusa.org.