

12 tips for stress reduction.

Managing and supporting stress through lifestyle changes is a valuable approach to promote overall wellbeing. Here's **12 direct changes** you can make to **help combat stress**. It may be helpful to make 1 or 2 changes at a time.

Reduce or avoid caffeine

Limit or avoid sources of caffeine such as coffee, tea, energy drinks, and soda. Caffeine can increase anxiety and disrupt sleep patterns, contributing to stress.

Limit sugar and processed foods

Reduce your consumption of sugary snacks, desserts, and highly processed foods. These foods can lead to energy spikes and crashes, affecting your mood and stress levels.

Listen to your body

Pay attention to how different foods and substances affect your body and stress levels. Mindfulness skills may be helpful for this. Make adjustments based on your unique needs and responses.

Avoid overeating

Practise mindful eating and avoid overeating, which can lead to discomfort and stress. Pay attention to your body's hunger and fullness cues.

Minimise alcohol intake

Limit alcohol consumption, as excessive alcohol can disrupt sleep and negatively impact mood. If you drink, do so in moderation and be mindful of the effects on your stress levels.

Limit fast food and fried foods

Reduce the consumption of fast food and fried items, as they are often high in unhealthy fats and salt. These can negatively affect both physical and mental wellbeing.

Be wary of allergenic foods

Identify and avoid foods that you may be sensitive or allergic to, as they can exacerbate stress symptoms. Common allergenic foods include dairy, gluten, and certain nuts.

Manage portion sizes

Be mindful of portion sizes to prevent overeating and support better digestion. Eating large meals can lead to discomfort and stress.

Cut down on excessive salt

High-sodium diets can contribute to hypertension, which is linked to stress and anxiety. Be mindful of your salt intake and opt for low-sodium alternatives.

Steer clear of excessive caffeine in the evening

Avoid consuming caffeine in the late afternoon and evening to ensure better sleep quality. A good night's sleep is crucial for managing stress.

Reduce or avoid nicotine

If you smoke, consider quitting, or at least reduce your nicotine intake. Nicotine is a stimulant that can increase stress and anxiety and impact sleep.

Stay hydrated

Drink plenty of water throughout the day to stay hydrated. Dehydration can contribute to stress and fatigue.

Remember that while avoiding or limiting certain substances and foods can help manage stress, **it's equally important to add stress-reducing foods and practices into your life too.**

A balanced diet, regular physical activity, adequate sleep, and mindfulness techniques are all essential for good stress management. Please consult a healthcare professional or nutritionist for specific advice on managing stress through diet.

