

# STRESS



## What is stress?

You can suffer from stress at any age. Stress is when you feel:

- pressure
- strain
- anxiety
- nervous tension
- trauma.

Stress is normal. Stress can even be helpful, as it may make you more determined to complete a task or to win at sport. When people talk about being stressed, it means that the stress is too much for them and has gone on for too long. What people need are enough skills to be able to cope with different levels of stress. When the stress in your life becomes too great, you can become ill.

## What exactly is stress?

When you get worried or stressed, it can affect your body in a number of ways.

- Your heart beats faster.
- Your muscles tense.
- Your stomach feels tight, or you feel sick.
- Your breathing becomes fast and shallow.
- You sweat more.
- You find it hard to get to sleep.
- You wake up feeling tired, even though you slept.

24

As you go through the different stages of growth, you have to face up to change. It will happen whether you want it to or not. This can cause stress for some people. There is more stress if you don't know in advance what is going to happen to you. Learning about how your body will change as you grow may help to reduce some of the stress.

## Everyone gets stressed over something

We're all different, but some events get everyone stressed. Bushfires, cyclones, earthquakes, car accidents and droughts — especially for country people — are stressful for everyone.



## Try some breathing exercises

There are several different breathing exercises for reducing stress.

- Breathe in through the nose and let the air fill the bottom of your lungs first. Breathe out slowly, concentrating on letting the muscles of your body relax.
- Breathe in through the nose. As you breathe out, say a positive statement to yourself, such as 'relax' or 'calm down'.
- Think of a pleasant place that you like to visit. Breathe slowly through your nose as you picture the things you like about your place.

## Stretch and relax

Stretch out your muscles by reaching your arms above your head (or just stretch whatever part of your body you feel needs stretching).

## Exercise

Many people find physical activity helps relieve stress. It can be fun, too. Exercise is great and it can help you to sleep better.

## Aim for a balanced lifestyle

Make time for rest, relaxation, thinking time, exercise, healthy eating, relationships and a social life, as well as for work or study. Try to:

- learn to manage your time
- take time out to enjoy your life
- set goals and work towards them. Smaller goals are just as important as long-term goals
- remember that you can only do so much homework or schoolwork, and make sure you take regular breaks
- talk to a supportive friend or family member
- keep your sense of humour!



## Balance your life

Sometimes the only way that an adult can really reduce stress is by changing something in their life. Even at your age, some things in your life may need major changes. It sounds huge, but take it one step at a time. Changes may include:

- making new friends
- keeping up with schoolwork
- getting your chores done right away
- organising your room so that you can find the bed!

Talk through the things that are worrying you with a friend, or with an adult you can trust.

1. When you are stressed, you feel (any three):

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2. How does stress affect your body?(Name three effects)

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3. How can we reduce stress? (Name three ways)

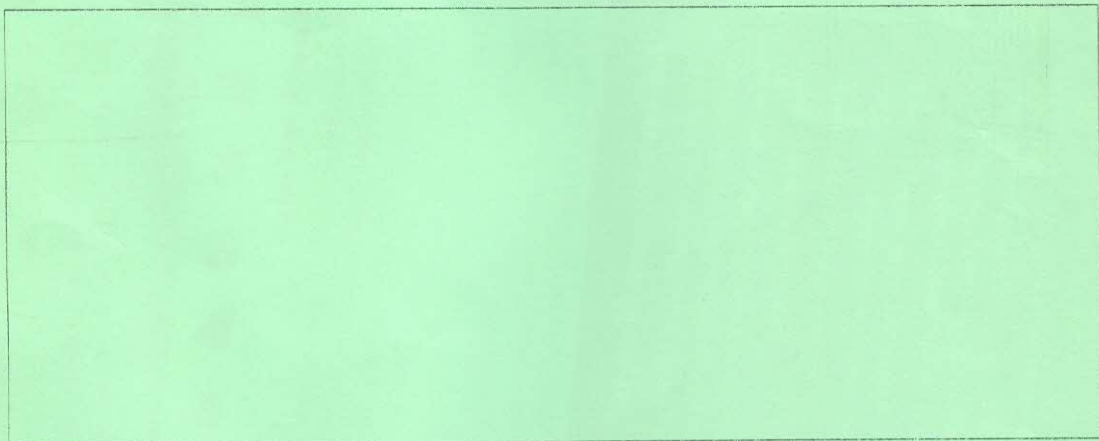
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4. Draw a picture below to help people relax and think positive:



***Remember that Stress is Normal and even helpful!!! It makes you more determined to complete a task. But it can be harmful if it becomes too great! Try to develop a balanced lifestyle!***

