

# “I feel like stress is all around me. How can I manage it better?”

There are ways to control some of the stress you have in your life.



Stress is something that all people experience. Some of the major causes of stress today are money, work and social media. Fortunately, there are methods and resources that can help you.

## Financial stress

As the cost of college, medical services, food and many other items rise, it can put a strain on you and your family's finances. If you feel like you're struggling with finances, it may be time to take action.

- **Create a budget.** This can be one of the simplest ways to understand how you're spending money and get control of your finances. A budget allows you to decide when and how you are going to spend your money. You may even find extra money that you can use to pay off other debts.
- **Save, save, save.** If possible, save any extra money you have and put it in an account for emergencies, like car or house repairs. Even something as small as \$25 a week can go a long way if you stick to it.
- **Talk to a professional.** Speaking with a financial planner can help you create a budget and, if you have extra money, invest for retirement or emergencies. If you are struggling with debt, talking to your bank or a credit counseling agency can help you understand your options.
- **Contact your EAP.** Some employers have an EAP (Employee Assistance Program) which is a benefit that helps employees with personal or work related problems. Financial stress is one of the many issues that an EAP can help you with. They may offer counseling and referrals to professionals. Contact your Human Resources department to find out more about your company's EAP.

## Work stress

Short-term work related stress, like having to meet a deadline or working on a challenging project, usually subsides when the task is complete. But chronic stress, like a constant overload of work, feeling unappreciated, or lack of support by management, can take a toll on anyone.

- **Talk to your boss.** Most managers want their employees to be healthy and productive, so work with your boss to come up with a plan that will relieve some of the stress. You may find out that you need to improve on something, like time-management or prioritizing projects. And your boss will have a better understanding of the things that cause you stress.

- **Take the healthy approach.** Since exercise and eating healthy can help decrease stress, see if you can improve on those. If permitted, take a walking break during your shift. Make your own healthy lunches and snacks instead of ordering take-out or using the vending machine. Increase your healthy habits outside of work, too!
- **Take a time out.** If you're working on a stressful project that feels like it's going nowhere, take a break from it. Try meditating at your desk, going for a walk or working on a different task. Sometimes, a little time away can recharge your brain. You may even want to take a day off to de-stress after the project is completed.
- **Find support.** Simply talking to someone about what is stressing you out can help as well. Talk with your colleagues, a family member or friend. You can also contact your EAP.

## Social media stress

While social media has its benefits, like allowing people to connect globally or helping advertise a business, it also has negative aspects. Cyber bullying, information overload and privacy concerns are new issues stemming from social media. You can still enjoy it, but there are ways to avoid the negative impacts.

- **Shut it off.** Simply turning off your phone or computer and taking a break from social media for a few hours, days or even weeks, can give your mind a break from the distraction.
- **Go outside.** Leave your phone at home, and take your dog for a walk, take your kids to the park or take a jog around the neighborhood. Sunshine provides vitamin D which can elevate your mood!
- **Avoid the negativity.** Follow positive and motivational pages on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. If someone you follow is being negative, block them. If someone cyber bullies you, report it to the company.
- **Delete some apps.** If you feel like you're on too many social media platforms, delete the ones you don't use often or don't enjoy as much.
- **Keep it in perspective.** From the pictures you see on Facebook and Instagram, it may seem like your friends are always having a wonderful time. You may feel as though your life is boring in comparison. But remember, the pictures you see of your friends are just a moment in time. People want to share the good times, not the bad times. No one's life is as perfect as it may appear on social media.

For more information about stress, visit [fallonhealth.org](http://fallonhealth.org), click Healthwise® Knowledgebase under Quick links and search "stress".

