Taking Charge of Stress

In any stressful situation there are four choices:

- Accept
- Avoid
- Alter
- Adapt

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Learning a better way to cope with stress!
Diaphragmatic Breathing:

Most adults breathe with their chest muscles instead of their belly muscles. Each breath supplies less oxygen. Your blood is forced to move quicker. This can promote high blood pressure. Deep breathing helps to

- release endorphins
- reduce pain
- reduce muscle tension
- reduce sleeplessness

Meditation: Start with 5 minutes and increase to 20 minutes.

Choose a quiet, dim room. Sit up straight in a chair with your feet flat on floor. Let your eyes droop slightly closed. Choose focus point a few feet in front of you. Using your abdominal rather than chest muscles…

- Take a deep breath.
- Exhale through your nose to a count to 10.
- Continue with deep breaths until all thoughts and sensations can be noticed then dismissed.
- Slowly return to normal breathing.

Visualization: Takes 2-3 minutes

Imagine a scene in which you can be relaxed.

Focus on the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings in your scene.

Continue focusing on your dream scene until you are able to feel like that.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: Allow 20 minutes

Relax your entire body as much as possible. Imagine the tension draining away with each breath. Contract and release each muscle in turn, starting with…

- feet, ankles, legs
- hips, back
- hands, wrists, arms, shoulders
- neck
- face

If some muscles are particularly tense repeat those parts of the exercise. Lie quietly for 5 minutes more. This exercise not only relaxes but trains the body to recognize and reduce tension.