

Name: _____

TIPS FOR COPING WITH STRESS

We all experience times of stress. Here are some simple tips for how you can manage stress:

- 1.** Try deep breathing. With your mouth closed, inhale deeply through your nose into your midsection and up through your neck, as if you were filling a glass of water. Then exhale through your nose from the top down, as if you were emptying the glass. Do this several times.
- 2.** If possible, take a time out. Remove yourself from the situation. Give yourself a few moments to calm down and collect your thoughts.
- 3.** Take a drink of water. Drinking relaxes your throat muscles and water keeps your brain hydrated.
- 4.** Visualize a place or an activity where you feel peaceful and calm. Do you imagine a beach? A mountain lake? Riding your bike, or jogging on a path, or creating a painting, or basking in the sun, or petting your cat? Let that image fill your mind while you breathe deeply as described above. If possible, close your eyes.
- 5.** Give yourself affirming messages throughout the day. For example, tell yourself, "Good job," or "I'll do better next time," or "I'm a good friend." Think often about your positive qualities and don't get bogged down in negative self-talk.
- 6.** Find a time every day when you can do something positive that is relaxing as well as energizing. Even a few minutes will help you feel solid and centered and better able to cope with stress.

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TIPS FOR REDUCING STRESS

An important part of mental health is paying attention to your stress level—how do you feel inside? What causes you to feel stressed? What can you do when your stress level is high? Here are ten simple suggestions that can help you ease the stress in your life.

- 1** You'll feel less stressed naturally if you get enough rest, eat balanced meals, and exercise. Keeping your body healthy and fit does a great deal to keep your mind from stress.
- 2** Balance the stressful parts of your life with hobbies and interests that are less stressful. If you're a serious student, take a break and do something that isn't mentally taxing. If you're a competitive athlete, include another activity in your life that doesn't require you to compete.
- 3** Work off your stress by doing something physical. Run, mow the lawn, dance, lift weights, or take a brisk walk.
- 4** Talk out your stress. Find someone you trust and feel comfortable confiding in.
- 5** Do something for others. Tutor school children, volunteer at a hospital, make regular visits to a person who lives in a nursing home, tell your parents you'll cook dinner, offer to drive your little sister to soccer practice.
- 6** Give yourself permission to make mistakes. Remember, also, that it's okay to admit them. You don't always have to be perfect.
- 7** Remind yourself that you don't have to solve the world's problems today. You don't have to decide your whole future this minute. One bad day doesn't mean that only bad days will follow.
- 8** Set aside time to dream. To jump-start your imagination, try drawing or writing in a journal.
- 9** Keep life interesting. Try something new now and then. Make new friends, eat new foods, try a different hairstyle or find a new hobby.
- 10** Identify the sources of your stress. Ask yourself, "Is there anything I can do to reduce the stress in my life? Can I cut out or change any of the sources of my stress?"