

# Inova TobaccoNET

## Stress Management Tips

Stress is a part of life, so too is the act of coping with unexpected events, challenging situations and adapting to long-term changes. Coping always involves mental and/or physical action. Go over this list and decide what positive steps you can take to make your life better.

### AWARENESS:

Learn to identify and understand what is causing your stress. It also is important that you learn to identify your stress signals (i.e. stomach upset, headaches, insomnia, eating less/more, increased smoking, drinking or drug use, and irritability).

### AVOIDANCE:

Stay away from situations or people who contribute to your feelings of stress.

### GET ORGANIZED:

Plan, schedule; organizing life's daily routines reduces stress.

### TAKE BREAKS:

Take breaks regularly (you did when you were smoking). Don't confuse working hard with working effectively. Also schedule at least one weekday evening and/or one weekend day to be reserved for an enjoyable, non-work related activity, something you can look forward to.



### REHEARSE:

Being prepared can reduce stress. When you're facing a situation that you know will be stressful to you, rehearse it, either mentally or with a friend. Anticipate what might occur and plan your response.

### DO IT NOW!:

Procrastination breeds stress. Do your most difficult or most hated task at the beginning of the day when you're fresh.

### KNOW YOUR LIMITS:

Be realistic about what you can accomplish in a day. Accept the fact that some days you are more productive than on other days.

### CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDES:

Think of stressful situations as a challenge to your creative thinking. Tell yourself that you will be OK. Also focus on the positive. Make a list every day of the things for which you are grateful.

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### LEARN TO SAY NO:

Say “no” when your schedule is full; to activities you don’t enjoy; to responsibilities that aren’t yours; to emotional demands that leave you feeling drained; to other people’s problems that you don’t have the power to solve.

### TREAT YOUR BODY RIGHT:

You will have more energy and self-confidence and be less susceptible to the physical side effects of stress when you eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep and exercise regularly. A brisk walk or a hike in the park can help reduce tension and leave you feeling refreshed and calm.

### POSITIVE SELF-TALK:

Use positive self-reinforcement: “I can handle this situation,” instead of frightening or depressing yourself by coming up with reasons why you can’t cope.

### TAKE CHARGE:

Make your life what **YOU** want it to be. Define your goals and go after them. Trying to reach “no goal” is like running in a race with no finish line.

### TALK OUT YOUR WORRIES:

Share your worries and concerns with someone whom you trust and respect. Schedule times for phone calls with people you care about and set up lunch or dinner dates with friends with whom you can share personal matters.

### LEARN TO ACCEPT WHAT YOU CANNOT CHANGE:

If the problem is beyond your control, try your best to accept the situation and focus on how **YOU** will handle it.

### AVOID SELF-MEDICATION:

Although there are many chemicals, including alcohol, that can mask stress symptoms, they do not help you adjust to the stress itself.

### LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHORT STRESS BREAKERS:

A quick walk, five minutes of stretching exercises, a brief nap, a neck massage or a hot shower can help you relax.

### GIVE IN ONCE IN AWHILE:

If you find that the source of your stress is other people, try giving in instead of fighting and insisting you are always right. You may find that others will begin to give in too. Ask yourself, “Do I want to be right, or do I want to be happy?”