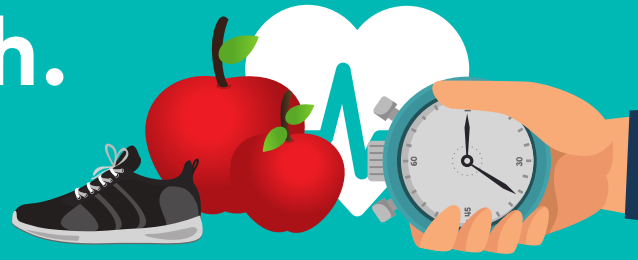# 10 Step Stress Solution.

Here are some self-care tips to help protect against stress.

1. Prioritise your health.

Many people aren't tuned in to their body and aren't aware until it is too late of the effects that stress and poor wellbeing is having on them. If you're feeling low on energy or are feeling tired, take a look at these ways to prioritise your health today.

- Sleep and wake up earlier.
- Eat little and often.
- Relax your mind and take regular breaks.
- Drink more water.

2. Get a good night's sleep.

A good night's sleep is incredibly important for your health. Sleep is just as important as eating healthy and exercising for your overall wellbeing as sleep is nature's healer. 5 ways that sleep will improve your health:

- You will be ill less frequently.
- You will be more relaxed.
- You will improve your memory.
- You will be able to maintain your weight.
- You will be at lower risk of heart disease or stroke.

3. Practice deep breathing.

What are the three most important things that we need to do to stay alive? Breathe, drink water and eat food. When we are stressed it has an impact on our breathing. Inhale slowly through your nose to the count of 5. Hold the breathe in your belly for 5-10 seconds. Count slowly to 8 as you exhale. Repeat this several times.

4. Stay hydrated.

Water is the most important nutrient for our bodies after oxygen. The human body is approximately 70% water, so when we haven't drunk enough water, our energy levels are lower and we feel more tired.

- Water cleanses the body of toxins.
- Water boosts your energy.
- Water helps to sip stress away.
- Water suppresses the appetite.
- Water speeds up your metabolism.
- Water can aid in exercise.

5. Eat for wellbeing.

Like oxygen and water, food is vital for our health and wellbeing. There has always been a link between stress and nutrition so assess if your diet is causing stress or promoting overall wellbeing...

- Do you eat regular meals?
- Do you eat breakfast?
- Do you eat fresh, home-prepared meals more than ready meals?
- Do you eat takeaway food less than once per week?
- Do you eat five portions of veg a day?
- Do you have a healthy balanced diet?

6. Get moving.

When your body goes into a state of stress, it's expecting some kind of physical activity. One way to control your stress level is to give your body what it wants - physical activity. Get out and go for a run, a swim, or anything to get your body moving.

7. Adopt a positive mind set.

Researchers in stress have discovered that by changing certain aspects of your body, your thoughts and your feelings can be changed too. Our state of mind can have a significant impact on our physical state.

- **Eliminate stress with a smile** - When you smile you immediately start to feel different. If you find yourself feeling sad or down, force yourself to smile, and you will notice the change in your thought patterns and motions.

- **Stand up straight** - It's 'mind over matter', Bad posture can have a negative impact on your emotional state. By standing upright or sitting straight with your spine erect your body is communicating to your mind that it needs to align its state.

- **Step back, take a deep breath and analyse the situation** - When you experience a stressful event, the first thing to do is step back, take a deep breath and analyse the situation. If you feel down and stressed, begin by acting like someone who is happy and relaxed. Think about how people you aspire to be would act and emulate them.

8. Master your time.

Time management is an important stress-management technique. If you fail to master your time, you will get overwhelmed, stressed and your productivity and efficiency diminish.
Time management helps you to reduce long-term stress by giving you direction when you have too much to do. It also puts you in control of where you are going and makes you more efficient in your use of time.

9. Don't be a slave to tech.

We live in a time where we are more connected than ever before, but yet life in our digitally switched on age is extremely stressful.
In the UK we are now so addicted to our smartphones that we check them every 12 minutes. The constant interruptions that technology can bring to our life, inevitably is starting to take a toll on our wellbeing and our relationships. Ways to take a break from the screen and reconnect:

- **Unplug for the day** - Try switching your Wi-Fi off for a day? Use the time to go old school and play a board game, pick up a book or even write a letter.
- **Choose to get active! -** When you choose to get outdoors and do hands on activities you choose to connect with your environment, your bodies and your friends.
- **Have a phone free dinner policy -** There is nothing worse than sitting at a dinner table where everyone is on their phones and no-one is talking. Put the phones in a bowl before dinner and have a rule that they stay there until everyone has finished.

10. Learn to say no.

We have all been there. Someone has asked us to do something that we really want to say no to, but we find ourselves saying yes and doing it anyway. By taking more things on, the only person we are harming is ourselves. Where no is the appropriate response, it is important to learn to say it without guilt. When you are over-committed and under too much stress, you are more likely to feel run down and even get ill so.

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