

McCALL KIDS DOT ORG
PERSONAL STRESS MANAGEMENT KIT
for

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*This kit is offered as a supplement to the
information presented on our web page
About Handling Stress a Little Better.*

*We suggest you download the
McCALL Kids Dot Org Personal Organizer which will
be useful in developing your
stress management plan.*

The free organizer is available elsewhere on this site.

PERSONAL STRESS MANAGEMENT KIT

Daily Stress Log

Use this worksheet to monitor how your stress level varies throughout the day. Record the frequency, causes, and levels of stress and your reactions and coping strategies. As you begin to manage stress, your completed Daily Stress Log provides a before-and-after check on your progress.

Stress Level Scoring:

3 = very stressful 2 = moderately stressful 1 = slightly stressful 0 = not stressful

TIME	PLACE	SOURCE	LEVEL	COPING STRATEGY

My major source of stress today: _____

My assessment of how I managed stress today: _____

What I learned about managing stress today: _____

What was funny today: _____

My exercise today: _____ How long I exercised: _____

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My Stress Control Plan

1. Using what you have learned from completing pages 1 - 3, determine how you can manage your time differently so you aren't overwhelmed by people, places, and things coming at you all at once. Do what you can to organize and schedule stressors so you don't have to do everything at the same time. (We recommend you use the *McCall Kids Dot Org Personal Organizer* to accomplish this task.)

2. List the stressor(s) you want to tackle first:

3. What would you like to change about the people, places, or things causing you stress? Can you? Or do you need to accept that the only change you can make is how you respond? What can you actually change here? Be specific. Itemize.

- What can you prevent? _____

- What can you control? _____

- What can you change? _____

4. Describe how you currently respond to this/these stressor(s):

5. Discuss why you are unhappy or dissatisfied with how you respond:

6. Describe the changes you can make in the way you now respond:

7. Using your strengths list (page 2), list the resources you have available to make the desired changes: _____

Considering the information available to you as the result of completing all pages, develop your action plan, describing each step you will take to resolve the stressful situation(s) to your satisfaction. Use the other side of this page to complete your stress control plan.

PERSONAL STRESS MANAGEMENT KIT
Easy Relaxation Techniques

Deep breathing is an excellent way to relieve tension and can be used as an immediate stress-relieving strategy. When feeling stress-related tension, take a brief time-out and relax your breathing. The rest of you will follow.

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position and belly-breathe, don't chest-breathe. Pretend your belly is a balloon that you are going to fill and empty. Be aware of it by placing your hands on your stomach. As you inhale, let your belly expand and take in the air. As you exhale, let the air out your balloon slowly. Feel your belly-balloon rise and fall as you breathe. Belly-breathe, don't chest-breathe.
- Relax and breathe through your nose, not your mouth. Nose-breathe naturally with your eyes closed. As you breathe out, think *one*. As you breathe in, think *one*. Continue for 10 to 20 minutes, but don't watch a clock, just think *one*. If your mind wanders, gently pull it back to thinking *one* every time you exhale; *one* every time you inhale. After 10 to 20 minutes, relax a little longer with your eyes closed, then a little longer with your eyes open. Don't concern yourself with doing it right. Practice. Relaxation will happen. Relaxation will happen easier the more you practice. To start, practice once or twice daily.
- Try to touch your ears with your shoulders. Hold the position for a count of 4. Let your shoulders drop. Now rotate each shoulder separately to the rear. Repeat each shoulder rotation 5 to 10 times. Then rotate both shoulders together 5 to 10 times.
- Sit down and relax, closing your eyes. Massage the back of your neck, concentrating on the area that feels tense. Cup your thumbs at the front of your neck and massage on both sides of your spinal column, letting your head fall limply back against your rotating fingers. Use your fingers to massage around your hairline and under your jaws and your cheekbones. Gently draw a line up and down the side of your nose with one finger. How do you feel? Warm?
- Lie down and bend your knees. Press your back down hard so that every part of your back touches the surface. At the same time, pull in hard with your stomach muscles. Then relax, completely letting go of tension. This technique is good for your back and helps firm your abdominal muscles at the same time.

Of all the relaxation exercises we considered for this page, we liked *Easy Relaxation Techniques* for its brief, to-the-point, comprehensive presentation. A hatful of thanks and a tip-of-that-hat to Doctor Martha Lamberts of Washington State University who developed it.