

How can you beat stress?

Chill out and take a break. Think about what's going on in your life. Remember you are in control. You may not be able to change the outside world, but you can learn to deal with it. Here are some tips for beating stress. (Share them with your parents. Maybe they can use some help too!)

- ▶ **Recognize you are in charge of your stress.** You have control over a lot of your activities. You can choose to make changes in your life which reduce your stress.
- ▶ **Try to determine the importance of the situation.** Example: If you are not invited to a certain party, it is not the end of the world. It may seem that way, but it's not. There *will* be other parties.
- ▶ **Go easy on yourself.** No one is perfect. No one gets it right all the time. No one always has all the answers. If you are trying hard and doing your best, that's all any one can ask of you. Give yourself credit.
- ▶ **Take one thing at a time and prepare for it.** Manage your time wisely. For example: if you have two big tests on Thursday, don't wait until Wednesday night to study for both of them. A little planning can go a long way to reducing stress.
- ▶ **Take care of yourself.** Eat healthy foods. Limit your intake of caffeine and get enough rest. Drugs and alcohol won't solve anything and may lead to bigger problems.
- ▶ **Exercise regularly.** Pick a physical activity you really like, not what you think others expect you to do.
- ▶ **Laugh or cry a little bit.** It may help to relieve your feelings and improve your outlook. It's not hard to do, and it can reduce stress. Remember, this too shall pass!
- ▶ **Get involved.** Join activities at your school, your church or recreation center. You will feel better about yourself and build new friendships.
- ▶ **Relax.** Relaxing is essential for everybody's physical and mental health, and enriches your quality of life. Find out what really helps you relax and spend at least half an hour each day doing it. It might be curling up with a good book, going on a bike ride or listening to your favorite music.
- ▶ **Visualize yourself doing the activity or being in the situation which is giving you stress.** Use your mind to "see" how you can manage a potentially stressful situation in advance. Whether it's a dreaded presentation or a challenging sports event, you may find that visual rehearsals boost self-confidence and lead to increased success, especially when you see yourself being great!
- ▶ **Don't suffer in silence.** A heart-to-heart talk with someone you trust can help you get rid of bottled-up feelings and help you see things in a different light. Don't hesitate to go to your school counselor or a trusted adult for help. Knowing when to ask for help is a strength, not a weakness.

Adapted from the National Mental Health Association's *Teen Stress: A Teen's Guide to Surviving Stress*

Be sure to keep your SELF in mind!
Sleep, Exercise, Leisure, Food