



Exercise Choices for

RELIEVING STRESS

Staying active is a great way to handle stress. Exercise can help you burn off steam and clear your mind. In addition, activities like yoga and tai chi can teach you to calm your mind and body.

Choose activities that help you handle stress. Keep in mind that what works for some people might not work for you. Here are some things to think about when choosing activities to help you lower stress.

- **Before you get started.** Check with your health care practitioner before starting any new program. If you have certain health issues some activities may not be safe for you.
- **If your office gym causes stressful work thoughts,** try walking or some other outside activity.
- **If you work from home or in a cubicle,** you might like the social aspect of group exercise (such as a dance or fitness class).
- **If you work around people all day,** you might find a quiet activity like tai chi or yoga more calming than other exercises. Or you can go for a run by yourself.
- **If you play competitive sports,** you may be activating your fight or flight response. Add some Pilates, tai chi, or yoga to your routine to give your fight or flight response a break.
- **Pick activities that you enjoy.** Activities that make you upset or uncomfortable won't help you ease stress. And, you may be less motivated to do them. So pick activities that are fun for you.
- **Aim for 30 minutes of exercise a day most days of the week.** You can break up the 30 minutes into three 10-minute blocks if it's easier for your schedule. Remember, every little bit will help.
- **The mental and emotional benefits of exercise are many.** In addition to helping to lower your stress level, exercise can help improve your mood, reduce anxiety, combat depression, improve self-confidence, and raise self-esteem.

Ask your health care practitioner if there are any tests, referrals, or treatments that might be helpful to use along with your current treatment plan.