

## Stress - Tips for Quick Relief

The daily realities of managing diabetes, prediabetes and other blood sugar related issues might be stressful.

But the amount of stress you experience, separate from health concerns, can be a real wild card. It can affect your health like a bully trying to grab you by your shirt collar and slam you up against the wall.

Whatever your genetic weak links are, the vulnerabilities you inherited from your blood relatives, that is what shows up in response to stress.

So if you have diabetes or other blood sugar related health problems, **how you respond to stress is super important.** It can make the difference between getting blood sugar under control and back to a healthier range, or having blood sugar worsen and then go onto more serious consequences.

***Here are some tips for dealing with stress, as it relates to blood sugar, insulin effectiveness and wellness.***

- 1. Be sure to get enough sleep each night.** It's hard to feel calm and refreshed if you aren't getting enough sleep. And stress can interfere with the ability to rest and sleep. It's not fair. Do what you can to get a good night's sleep each night; it can help keep stress from taking over.
- 2. Take a bath and add Epsom salts to the bathwater.** This is an inexpensive way to help reset your body and spirit. Turn on the water tap and fill your bathtub to a comfortable height, at a temperature that feels good to you, and add 2 – 3 cups of Epsom salts to the bathwater as the tub fills. Once the water level is where you want, get in the tub and let your body soak for 15 – 30 minutes. As the water drains away, visualize that your worries, concerns and stresses are going right down the drain with the bathwater at the same time. If you are going through a stressful period of time, do this every day, as needed.
- 3. Do some deep breathing several times a day.** It's a great way to reset feelings of stress and shift to feeling calmer.

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Here's a helpful breathing exercise you can do anytime, anywhere. It's free, simple, private and convenient.

- Place your hand over your belly
- **Breathe in and out, feel your belly go in & out**, *not* your chest going up and down
- Breathe in for a count of 4
- Hold for a count of 4
- Breathe out for a count of 7
- Repeat this 6 - 8 times, as needed

4. **Make healthy eating a priority.** Plan your meals. Feeling highly stressed will tempt you to eat high-calorie comfort foods, high-carb snacks and junk. One of the best ways to limit the damage stress does is to eat well despite feeling stressed.

5. **Exercise. Every day.** The movement and increased blood flow of exercise really help you to work off some of the chemicals that are released when you feel stressed. This helps to limit the damage of chronically high levels of stress chemicals like cortisol and adrenaline (epinephrine).

6. **Do a stress walk.** That's right, get up and walk around wherever you are, at a brisk pace, when you feel particularly stressed. Just this simple act of getting in motion and moving purposefully helps you to blow off some steam, and minimize the damage stress can do.

- ✓ Some examples: just had a bad phone call? Get up and walk it off.
- ✓ Someone do or say something hurtful to you? Walk it off.
- ✓ Just got some bad news? Walk it off.
- ✓ Feel overwhelmed for whatever reason? Get up and walk it off.
- ✓ Simply taking a walk can leave you feeling better, mind clearer and spirit calmer in response to stress. It's OK if you walk around your home, office or block. But get up and move. It's a real help.

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