



Manage Stress

Pay attention to your level of stress, which may increase during busy times such as holidays. Stress comes in many forms, and can have a negative effect on health if it continues too long or feels overwhelming. Many tools are available to help you manage and reduce your stress.

- Manage Stress: A Healthy Living Message
http://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Manage_Stress.asp

The Manage Stress Healthy Living message website includes information such as:

- Specific suggestions for managing stress
- Linkage to a [Manage Stress Workbook](#) with a focus on mindfulness
- A [Pleasant Activities Tip Sheet](#)
- Links to relaxation recordings. These include simple breathing exercises and mindfulness meditation. The recordings range from 2 minutes to 22 minutes. They can be very relaxing.

Veterans Health Library---

<http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/>

The Veterans Health Library (VHL) offers Veterans, their families and caregivers 24/7 Internet access to comprehensive, Veteran-focused health information that's consistent with VA clinical practice. Its information, resources, and tools are engaging, "Veteran-friendly" and written in plain language VHL helps Veterans understand and manage health problems, make informed health decisions, and actively partner with their health care teams. Check out the VHL for more information.

- Stress: Causes and Effects
http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/Search/142.85163_VA
- Keys to Maintaining Stress
http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/Search/142.85165_VA

Basic Stress Management Suggestions:

- **Physical Activity**—Take a brisk walk or engage in other physically demanding activities. This may reduce your stress. Regular physical activity is best.
- **Problem Solving**—Learn problem solving skills! They can improve your ability to cope. Your VA may offer a class on problem solving skills. There is also a web-based problem-solving program available to you. It is listed the under veteran training in the helpful websites below.
- **Relaxation Training**—Learn relaxation and mindfulness skills. These skills can help you to manage the responses in your body that come with stress. Daily relaxation may protect you from at least some of the consequences of stress.
- **Expression**—Speak up in respectful ways. Sharing thoughts and feelings in an assertive and respectful manner can help buffer stress. Keeping negative thoughts inside can increase feelings of stress.
- **Time Management**—List what needs to get done, make plans for addressing issues, and stick to the plan. There are several self-help books on time management at libraries and book stores.
- **Positive Thinking**—Stress is often associated with negative thinking. Focus your attention on positive thoughts about yourself. It may help to think about favorite people, songs, poems, places, or hobbies.



- **Pleasant Activities**—You may be feeling the effects of stress if you are not making time for fun in your life. Plan to have regular, enjoyable activities and see if this reduces your stress.

Helpful Web Sites* (indicates non-VA web site):

<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/>

<http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/>: Includes online training in:

1. Anger and Irritability Management Skills (AIMS)
2. Moving Forward (problem solving)
3. Veteran Parenting
4. PTSD Coach

<http://healthfinder.gov/healthtopics/population/men/mental-health-and-%20relationships/manage-stress> * (Spanish translations available here)

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HandlingStress/>*

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/stress-tips.aspx>*

Veterans Crisis Line, including on-line chat service and text option for Suicide Prevention

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Suicide Prevention campaign expanded its outreach to all Veterans with an online one-to-one chat service. It is designed for those Veterans who prefer reaching out for assistance using the Internet and is at

<http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>. Veterans may also reach confidential help through sending a text to **838255** or calling **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** and **press option 1**.

Additional relaxation training and stress management resources:

Mobile Apps are available at:



<https://mobile.va.gov/appstore>

Here are a few apps that are specifically for Veterans and their families:



- **Breathe2Relax*** App—learn deep breathing skills. Free of charge and available on the App Stores



- **PTSD Coach** Mobile App—free of charge and available on the App Store. The PTSD Coach App helps you learn about and cope with the symptoms related to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that commonly occur following trauma.



- **Moving Forward**—is useful for anyone with stressful problems. It is especially helpful in managing challenges such as: returning to civilian life, balancing school and family life, financial difficulties, relationship problems, difficult career decisions, and coping with physical injuries.



- **Mindfulness Coach**—designed to help Veterans, Service members and others learn how to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness means paying attention, on purpose, to whatever is going on in the present moment without passing judgment on it.