



Manage Stress

Pay attention to your level of stress, which may increase during busy times or times of change. 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
https://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.

Veterans Health Library---

<https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/>

The Veterans Health Library (VHL) offers Veterans, families and caregivers 24/7 Internet access to a variety of health information. It is available to anyone, anywhere, no matter where they receive care. The VHL information, resources, and tools are

written for Veterans. Items within the VHL on Manage Stress include:

- Stress: Causes and Effects
https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/Search/142.85163_VA
- Keys to Managing Stress
https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/Search/142.85165_VA

Basic Stress Management Suggestions:

- **Physical Activity**— Take a brisk walk or do something else that is active. Regular physical activity is best for reducing stress.
- **Problem Solving**—Learn problem solving skills! They can improve your ability to cope. There is a web-based problem-solving program available and your VA may offer a class. See Veteran training in the helpful websites below.
- **Relaxation Training**— Learn relaxation and mindfulness skills. These skills can help you to notice and manage the responses in your body that come with stress. Daily relaxation may protect you from some of the consequences of stress.
- **Expression**— Speak up in respectful ways. Sharing thoughts and feelings in an assertive, 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 many resources on time management in libraries and on-line.
- **Positive Thinking**— Stress is often associated with negative thinking. Focus your attention on positive thoughts. It may help to practice gratitude by:
 - Listing at least 3 things each day that you feel grateful for
 - Asking others what they are grateful for
 - Expressing gratitude by thanking others
 - Asking yourself, when facing a challenge, “What can I be grateful for in this situation?”
- **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.
- **Social Support**—Building social connections can help stress seem more manageable. Consider ways to connect with others, such as:
 - Volunteering
 - Walking with a partner
 - Planning a get together with family or friends
 - Take a class or join a club
 - Contact a friend by phone or text or email

Helpful Web Sites

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

<https://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 On-Line

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

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 <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>. Veterans may also reach confidential help by sending a text to **838255** or calling **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** and **pressing 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 Store.



- **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 occurs following trauma.

(*indicates non-VA website)



- **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.