

I'm always stressed

Stressed out all the time? There are a number of reasons you might be struggling to beat stress. Find out what it looks like when stress is causing a problem for your health. If it's really serious and you can't shake the stress, there might be something more serious going on.

Some of the things this can feel like:

- ▶ overwhelmed
- ▶ can't stop thinking about something
- ▶ always numb or detached
- ▶ regular sleeping problems
- ▶ always anxious, moody or frustrated.

When it causes a problem

Stress could be causing a problem for your health and your ability to cope if you're:

- ▶ sleeping badly
- ▶ feeling irritable about yourself or those around you
- ▶ having troubles concentrating
- ▶ having issues connecting with others
- ▶ feeling depressed, panicky or anxious.

If you're having any of these signs, it is a good indicator you need to work some stress relief tactics into your life and start managing your stress.

What can I do now?

- ▶ Work on relaxation techniques.
au.reachout.com/ways-to-relax
- ▶ Get help from others if possible.
- ▶ Try meditation.
au.reachout.com/smiling-mind
- ▶ Download ReachOut's apps designed assist with worry and relaxation:
Breathe au.reachout.com/reachout-breathe-app
WorryTime au.reachout.com/reachout-worrytime-app.

What does it mean if you're always stressed?

Stress is our body's way of rising to a challenge, and preparing to meet a tough situation with focus, stamina, and heightened alertness. But if you're always stressed out, it could be a sign that your body isn't dealing with the day-to-day stuff anymore. You might have gotten into a habit of negative thinking that you need to break.

To help manage the stress, it may be good to get the problem out in the air. You can't fix a problem if you don't face it. Talking to the person involved, a mate, or someone else you trust, may help you work out why you are stressed out and what you can do about it.

It could be something else

If you feel overwhelmed and like you can't go on, maybe you have trouble with coping skills. If you've tried a few stress tactics and they don't work, you might also have a more serious stress or anxiety disorder.

Some people worry all the time, and may need to do stuff to change the way they deal with things. Or they are more than normally afraid of something. That's fine – it's totally manageable, but you might need advice from an expert to figure out what's going on and what to do. They can give you the right strategies for reducing the type of stress you have, and a psychologist can work with you to train your brain to get out of habits that you don't like. Get information on anxiety in one of our handy fact sheets.

au.reachout.com/im-always-stressed

Ways to relax

Knowing how to chill out and relax is really important for your mental and physical health, particularly if you're finding something a bit stressful. Find out info on different ways people relax, learn about breathing techniques, and what to do if you're finding it hard to chill out.

This can help if:

- ▶ you're a bit stressed
- ▶ you're a bit anxious
- ▶ your life is really busy.

Why it's important to chill out

Relaxation is really important for your mental health and wellbeing. Everyone needs time in their everyday lives to chill out and enjoy themselves, but it's easy to forget this when things get busy. If you know how to relax, and make an effort to actually relax when you need to, it can be a great coping strategy to help you when you're stressed out. People who are able to relax are more likely to bounce back from tough times, tend to be happier, have better physical health and are less likely to develop serious mental health difficulties.

How to chill out

There are a lot of different things you can do to relax and chill out. A lot of forms of relaxation, like walking and sitting quietly, are really simple, easy to do, and don't take much time. Others require more discipline and some training. Everyone will find some strategies for relaxation work better than others. The best thing to do is try out some of the suggestions below and make the ones that best fit your lifestyle a regular habit.

Some relaxation activities include:

- ▶ going for a walk
- ▶ taking some time out and really focusing on what's happening around you
- ▶ listening to quiet and relaxing music, which impacts your heart rate
- ▶ going fishing
- ▶ playing your favourite sport
- ▶ taking a bath
- ▶ going to a movie or watching a DVD
- ▶ focusing your attention on a puzzle

- ▶ reading a book
- ▶ learning yoga or meditation
- ▶ practicing meditation.

Practicing breathing techniques

When you're stressed out or feeling anxious, your breathing speeds up and becomes shallow, reducing how much oxygen reaches your organs. Learning breathing techniques is a great way of preventing you from experiencing the physiological symptoms of anxiety. To learn how to breathe efficiently:

- ▶ Become aware of your breathing. Place one hand on your upper chest and one on your stomach. Breathe in so that your stomach rises, and then falls back as you breathe out. The hand on your chest shouldn't move too much.
- ▶ Get a steady rhythm of breathing. Try and take in the same amount of air each time you breathe in.
- ▶ If you've managed the two steps above, try and slow your breathing rate down. Add a short pause between when you finish breathing out, and when you take another breath.

It might not feel totally comfortable at first, as it can sometimes feel like you're not getting quite enough air. But if you practice regularly it should begin to feel comfortable and easy.

What can I do now?

- ▶ Try breathing techniques: au.reachout.com/relaxation-training.
- ▶ Learn more about mindfulness and what it does: au.reachout.com/what-is-mindfulness.
- ▶ Set aside some time each day just for you to relax.
- ▶ Download ReachOut's app, Breathe, and get direct guidance on controlling your breathing and heart rate: au.reachout.com/reachout-breathe-app.

au.reachout.com/ways-to-relax

All about getting active

We all know regular exercise is a beneficial thing to do, and there are plenty of reasons why. Get some tips on how to start exercising regularly, including what to do if you need a little push.

This can help if:

- ▶ you want to start becoming active
- ▶ you want to better your exercise routine
- ▶ you've stopped exercising and need a kick-start
- ▶ you want to feel better
- ▶ you want to be stronger.

Why exercise?

There are hundreds of good reasons it's worthwhile to get active and fit. Some of these include ...

- ▶ It charges you up: 30 minutes or more of vigorous exercise releases endorphins (the good stuff) in the brain giving you energy, vitality and the most intense natural high.
- ▶ It helps your positivity: studies show that exercise is a great way to manage depression. Not only does it release those happy hormones but also it can help clear your mind of stress, confusion and worry.
- ▶ It helps your social life: exercising with others, going to the gym or playing sports can be a great way to meet new people and to keep each other motivated.
- ▶ It helps you sleep: working the body and clearing the brain puts you in great stead for a good night's sleep and can help regulate problematic sleeping patterns.

If you need a little push

It's not always easy to get the motivation to start becoming active, so it's helpful to learn ways to get that push you need. If you plan your activities and personalise them to your interests and fitness-level, as well as try to see exercise as the positive and rewarding thing it is, you'll be much more likely to keep it up. For more information on how to get that push, visit: au.reachout.com/create-your-own-exercise-routine.

Getting started

Many people give up on exercise because they haven't learned the best way to go about it. Here's some help:

- ▶ Little by little: if you're just getting into it, start gently with an activity you can manage. You don't go straight into playing Mozart as soon as you start learning the piano. Start small and then little-by-little increase the length and intensity of your session.
- ▶ The ideal workout: once you're a little more fit, try and get in 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise a day.
- ▶ Work it into your daily routine: try walking or cycling instead of driving or taking public transport.
- ▶ Pick the right workout: choose something you enjoy doing. If you see exercise as a chore, it will become a chore, and nobody likes chores. Don't plan half an hour on a treadmill if you'd rather be shooting hoops.
- ▶ Stretch: the way your body handles exercise and how quickly it recovers is directly linked to how much you stretch. It prevents muscle problems and increases flexibility. All you need is warm-up and warm-down for five to ten minutes.

What can I do now?

- ▶ Talk to your doctor to assess your health first.
- ▶ Remember that just moving is exercise. Try something fun like dancing or gardening to start with.
- ▶ Start small and work your way up to a regular exercise routine.

au.reachout.com/all-about-getting-active