

# Dealing With Stress, Anxiety and Depression

Stress, anxiety, and depression influence your eating and physical activity habits and your weight. Some problems require professional assistance. The VA has services that can help. Discuss your concerns with your primary care provider.

Here are some things that you can try for yourself:



## Change Your Thinking:

- Your mood (sad, nervous, stressed, etc.) comes from your thoughts and what you tell yourself. In most cases, you can control your mood by choosing what you think about and what you tell yourself.
- When you are feeling too much stress, be aware of what you are thinking. Are these thoughts making you feel worse? If so, then replace them with more positive thoughts. Make a list of 4-5 positive statements about yourself that you can use when feeling stressed. Here are some examples:
  - I can control my reaction to a situation, even if I can't control the situation.
  - I am a good person.
  - I am calm and relaxed.
  - I am at peace with myself and with the world around me.
  - I will accept the things I cannot change. I will have the courage to change the things I can and I will learn to know the difference.



## Help Your Body Handle Stress:

- Make physical activity a part of every day.
- Eat a healthy diet high in fruit and vegetables. Drink plenty of water.
- Get enough rest.
- Try a massage.
- Take a long shower or bath.
- Take a break from stressful situations: count to 10, take a deep breath, daydream, or take a vacation if you can.
- Divide big tasks into little ones, and tackle one at a time.
- Learn how to relax and practice this regularly. Relaxation training is available through the VA.
- Arrange to have some quiet time for yourself each day.
- Talk over your troubles with someone you trust.
- Take the time to do things you enjoy.
- Plan ahead and pace yourself so you aren't late or in a terrible rush.
- Listen to or make music, paint, or express yourself artistically.
- Picture yourself handling particular stressful situations calmly and effectively.

