

MANAGING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH

STRESS

There's no way around it. Stress is part of our lives and it's not going away. Research shows that we need a certain amount of stress to motivate us to learn, grow and perform at our best. Yet, too much stress has been proven to be harmful to your health and well-being. Here are ways to help you oscillate between stress and recovery.

We all react to stress differently

Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain resulting from demanding circumstances. But many of our daily stressors can be negative influences that trigger our body's natural "fight or flight" response. When we learn to recognize stress, we can start to reframe our relationship to it and learn recovery strategies to be resilient.



According to various research, chronic stress has been linked to significant health concerns, including heart disease, obesity, depression, and digestive issues. Reducing your stress is one way to protect your health.

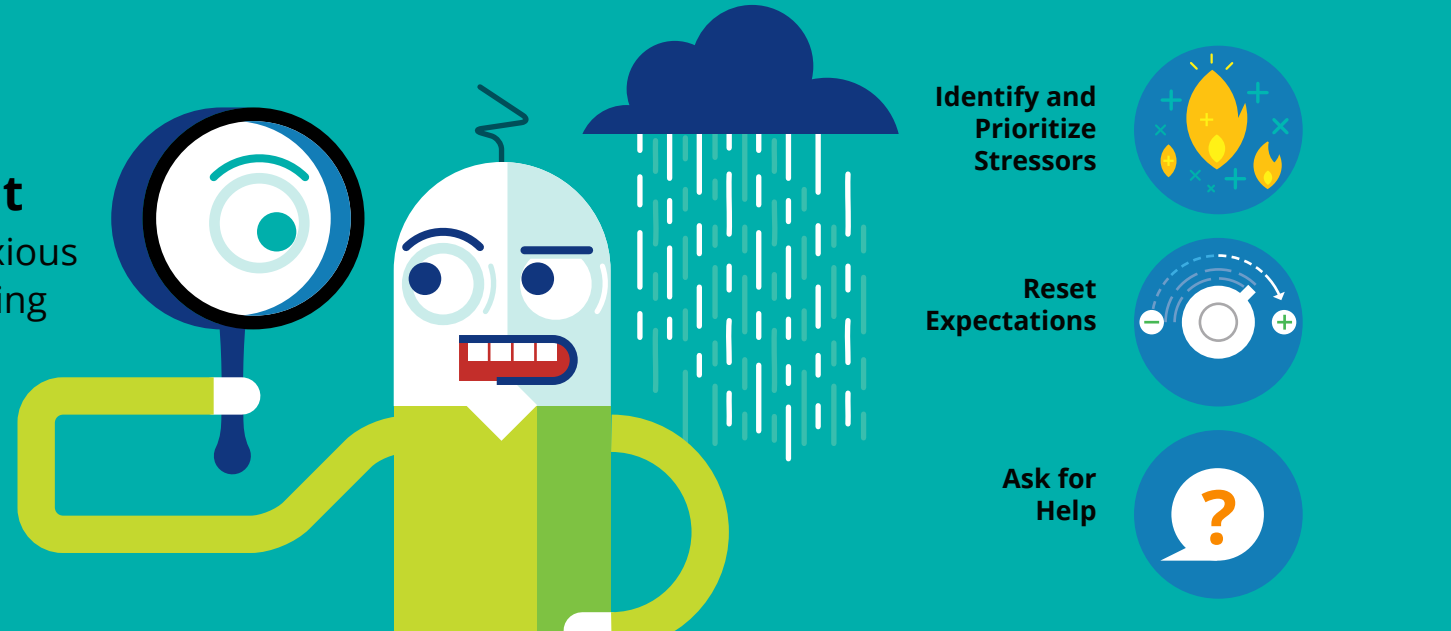
STRESS FOR SUCCESS

Sometimes stress is a positive force, motivating you to perform well or accomplish something new. Here are 3 simple steps to turn stress to your advantage:

SEE IT

Accept it or change it

Recognize you're feeling anxious and name the source. Ignoring stress doesn't resolve it. Acknowledging it helps you hit pause on your gut reaction and choose a more intentional response.



OWN IT

Scan for the good

Connect the stress to your values. We tend to stress more, and more intensely, about things we care about. Owning stress helps you channel it and direct your energy toward achieving your goals or overcoming meaningful challenges.



USE IT

Choose your mindset

Seeing stress as a challenge you've accepted in order to reach a higher goal may help you feel more in control over the situation. When you get good at reframing stress as a challenge, you get better at saying, "I'm up for it. I can manage this."



"The body's stress response was not designed to kill us. In fact, the evolutionary goal of the stress response was to help boost the body and mind into enhanced functioning, to help us grow and meet the demands we face."

—Harvard Business Review

Source: <https://hbr.org/2015/09/stress-can-be-a-good-thing-if-you-know-how-to-use-it>

STRESS-RECOVERY CYCLE

Too much stress, for too long, can be damaging to our health and well-being. When you can properly manage your stress and recovery cycle, you'll likely be a stronger, more resilient person—better able to respond to, and bounce back from, adversity.

Sweat it out: A regular exercise regimen can be very beneficial in reducing the effects of stress.

Just one thing rule: The quality of work can suffer from mental fatigue and can take longer to complete when you are distracted from multitasking.

Take micro breaks: Replenish your physical, mental and emotional energy throughout the day.

It pays to relax: Yoga, meditation, and relaxation exercises help you reduce stress, and can boost immune function.

Tech-free zone in the bedroom: Electronic gadgets emit light in the blue- and-white range which disrupts your body's melatonin production, a hormone that helps you achieve deep, restorative sleep.

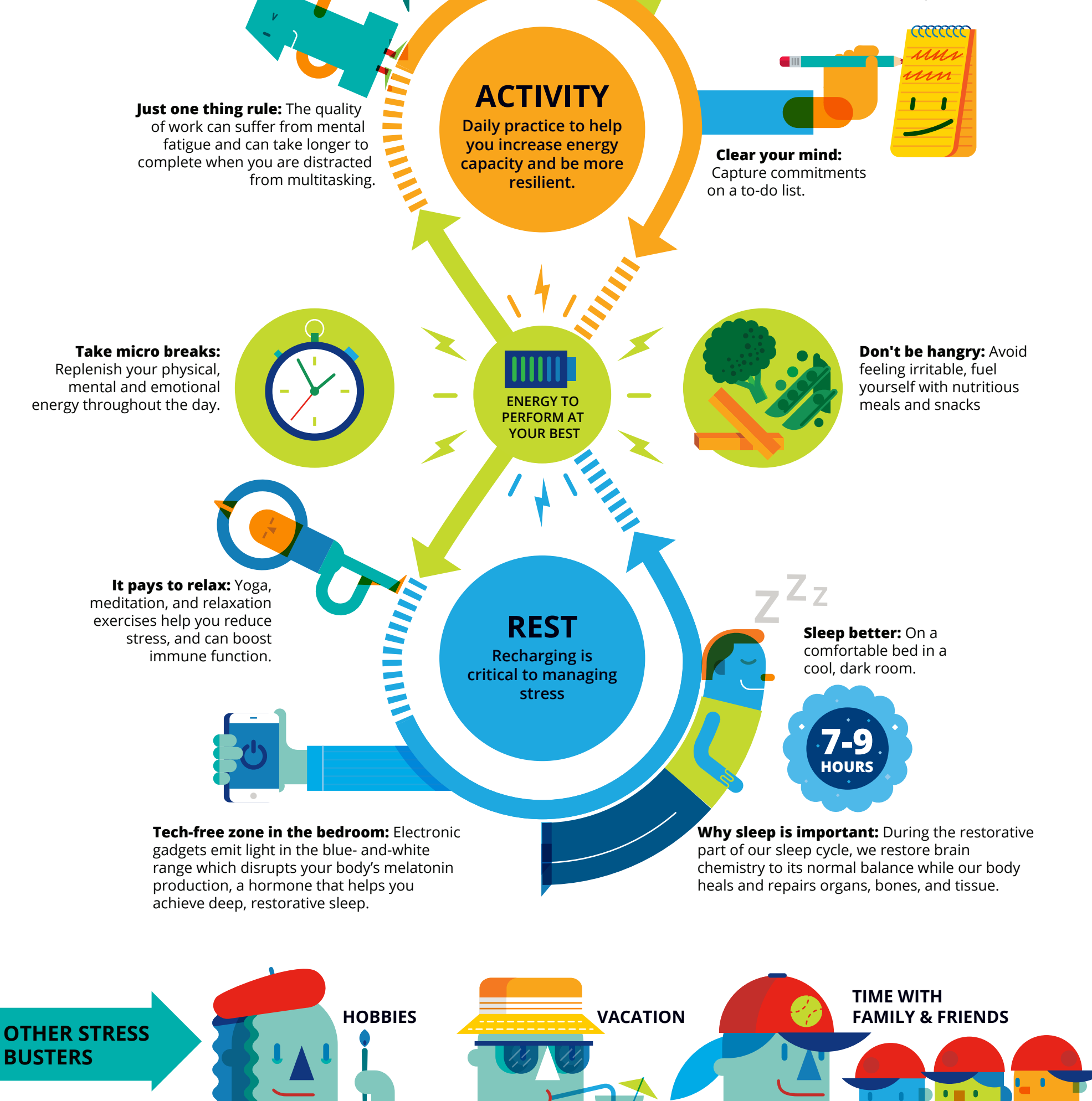
Practice mindfulness: Be self-aware when you are experiencing stress. Mindfulness helps you become more intentional and less reactive to the world around you.

Clear your mind: Capture commitments on a to-do list.

Don't be hungry: Avoid feeling irritable, fuel yourself with nutritious meals and snacks

Sleep better: On a comfortable bed in a cool, dark room.
7-9 HOURS

Why sleep is important: During the restorative part of our sleep cycle, we restore brain chemistry to its normal balance while our body heals and repairs organs, bones, and tissue.



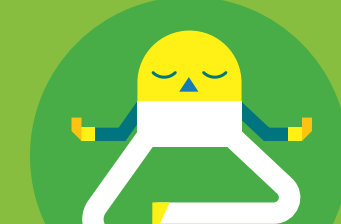
MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness hones our skills for being self-aware when we're experiencing stress. It also helps us become more intentional and less reactive, as well as expanding our ability to focus.

The next time you're feeling stressed or your mind racing, try to...



Stop what you are doing
Take a few deep breaths.
Observe what's going on in your body, speech, and mind.
Proceed with a thought, word, or action that will support you in the moment.



Meditation
Meditation has been scientifically proven to help reduce anxiety and stress, regulate emotions, and help navigate uncertainty.



Mindful breathing
Focus attention on your breathing. Notice the sensations going in and out. Pay attention to the rise and fall of your chest. If your mind wanders, simply notice where it goes and then bring your attention back to your breath.

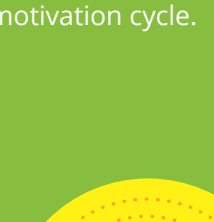
A regular "DOSE" of the brain chemicals **Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin, and Endorphins** can keep us upbeat.

Gratitude
Feeling grateful directly activates parts of the brain that produces dopamine and serotonin. It's part of our body's reward-motivation cycle.



Kindness
When you do something good for someone, your body emits dopamine and oxytocin, the hormone that boosts feelings of trust and friendship.

Attitude
Rehearsing positive interactions, remembering good events or even just making eye contact and smiling more can have positive impacts on our health.



Connectedness
Foster healthy relationships. Positive friends, family and counsellors can offer practical assistance and support to help you manage stress effectively.

DON'T FLY OFF THE HANDLE: Mindfulness builds your ability to pause before reaction, allowing you to see and choose your thoughts, then shift your response with more considered words and actions.

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