

Hurlburt ADAPT offers stress management tips
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In today's fast-paced, demanding, and responsibility-filled society, a person should consider attaining and sustaining a state of self-awareness to reduce the potential of becoming excessively stressed. Stress is the body's response to a perceived threat to prepare the body for fight or flight. The body's reaction to stress is the same whether the source of the stress is positive or negative.

In certain situations, stress can be positive by motivating higher levels of performance such as successfully completing a challenging project at work. In contrast, stress can be negative when it is experienced over a prolonged period. To prevent chronic stress, you must be proactive.

Consider the following tips for effective stress management, which are offered by the American Psychological Association:

- **Understand how you experience stress:** Everyone experiences stress differently. How do you know when you are stressed? How are your thoughts or behaviors different from times when you do not feel stressed?
- **Identify your sources of stress:** What events or situations trigger stressful feelings? Are they related to your children, family, health, financial decisions, work, relationships, or something else?
- **Learn your own stress signals:** People experience stress in different ways. You may have a hard time concentrating or making decisions; feel angry, irritable, or out of control; or experience headaches, muscle tension or a lack of energy. Gauge your stress signals.
- **Recognize how you deal with stress:** Determine if you are using unhealthy behaviors (such as smoking, drinking alcohol and over/under eating) to cope. Is this a routine behavior, or is it specific to certain events or situations? Do you make unhealthy choices because of feeling rushed and overwhelmed?
- **Find healthy ways to manage stress:** Consider healthy, stress-reducing activities such as meditation, exercising or talking things out with friends or family. Keep in mind that unhealthy behaviors develop over time and can be difficult to change. Don't take on too much at once. Focus on changing only one behavior at a time.
- **Take care of yourself:** Eat right, get enough sleep, drink plenty of water and engage in regular physical activity. Ensure you have a healthy mind and body through activities like yoga, taking a short walk, going to the gym, or playing sports that will enhance both your physical and mental health. Take regular vacations or other breaks from work. No matter how hectic life gets, make time for yourself — even if it's just simple things like reading a good book or listening to your favorite music.
- **Reach out for support:** Accepting help from supportive friends and family can improve your ability to manage stress. If you continue to feel overwhelmed by stress, you may want to talk to a licensed mental health professional who can help you better manage stress and change unhealthy behaviors.

Also, to further enhance one's own health and wellness, a person should responsibly use alcohol.

The National Institutes of Health recommends low-risk drinking. To ensure low-risk drinking, men should consume no more than four drinks in a day and no more than 14 drinks in a week. Women should consume no more than three drinks in a day and no more than seven drinks in a week.

A standard drink contains about one-half an ounce of pure alcohol which is generally found in 12 ounces of regular beer, eight ounces of malt liquor, five ounces of wine, or one-and-a-half ounces of 80-proof liquor such as whiskey, gin, rum, and vodka.

If you are considering changing your drinking habits, you will need to decide whether to cut down or to quit. It's a good idea to discuss different options with a doctor, a friend, or someone else you trust.

Quitting is strongly advised if you:

- Try cutting down but cannot stay within the limits you set.
- Have had an alcohol use disorder or now have symptoms.
- Have a physical or mental condition that is caused or worsened by drinking.
- Are taking a prescription or over-the-counter medication that interacts with alcohol.
- Are or may become pregnant.

If you do not have any of the above-listed conditions, talk with your doctor to determine whether you should cut down or quit based on factors such as:

- Family history of alcohol problems.
- Your age.
- Whether you've had drinking-related injuries.
- Symptoms of sleep disorders or sexual dysfunction.

Additionally, to further educate the American people regarding the responsible use of alcohol, the NIH Rethinking Drinking initiative offers numerous online interactive tools and resources accessible at <https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/Tools/Calculators/Default.aspx>

For more information, contact the Hurlburt Field Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Program at (850) 881-4237. The ADAPT Program provides a wide range of prevention education, outreach, evaluation, counseling, and treatment services to active-duty military members.

The ADAPT Program is located at 130 LeTourneau Circle, building 90311, directly behind the Hurlburt Youth Center. Its hours of operation are 0730-1630, Monday - Friday.

Family members of active-duty personnel should contact TriCare-Humana East at (800) 444-5445 for information and assistance in obtaining substance use evaluation, counseling, and treatment services.