



## Tips, Tricks & Recipes

### Coping With Stress - Focus on What is Within Your Control!

1. Nutrition: A well balanced diet will help the body's stress response be more effective
2. Rest and sleep: a rested body is less likely to overreact to potentially stressful situations
3. Exercise: A natural outlet for releasing excess energy stemming from the stress response
4. Avoid or limit use of substances: Some substances (caffeine and cigarettes) increase the stress response.
5. The relaxation response: A strategy for reducing the stress response and preventing stress exhaustion/chronic stress. Can involve deep breathing; progressive relaxation; autogenic relaxation; and visualization techniques.

Source: Keyano Collge, Shifting to Wellness; Managing Stress

### Upcoming Courses

Please visit [www.shiftingtowellness.ca](http://www.shiftingtowellness.ca) for a list of our upcoming courses

### Upcoming Events

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**Check out our new and improved website at [www.shiftingtowellness.ca](http://www.shiftingtowellness.ca)**

### Special Announcement Shifting to Wellness gets updated!

We are pleased to announce that we have secured funding support to update the Shifting to Wellness Program with the most recent research and information regarding shiftwork, its effects and how to best manage the shiftwork lifestyle. We have engaged experts in adult education, curriculum development, and employee health & wellness to apply their knowledge to help us create a product that is second to none. The newly improved resources will be available in the Fall 2005 – Stay tuned for further information about this exciting project.

## Shiftwork is a Stressor!

“Researchers have proposed three potentially interrelated pathways that may explain the association between shiftwork and health problems: disruption of circadian rhythms, adoption or worsening of unhealthy behaviours, and stress”, “shiftwork is a stressor”, “stress may increase susceptibility to disease”.

Source: Health Reports v13 i4 July 2002

### What is Stress?

*Stress*: a body response to an internal or external challenge. Some stress is good otherwise you'd be dead!

*Distress*: Negative stress that occurs when stress is poorly managed or allowed to get out of control. It is an unpleasant, damaging physical response to stress.

*Eustress*: Good stress that causes motivation, and enhances productivity and satisfaction in a situation. It is positive, preparing us to handle unfamiliar situations or solve problems.

Source: Keyano Collge, Shifting to Wellness; Managing Stress

### The Six Step Challenge – Become a Good Stress Manager:

1. Aware – Get in touch with the signs of stress and of your feelings, thoughts and wants.
2. Inform – Think about your own sources of stress and how these contribute to negative stress in your life.
3. Assess – Assess and prioritize sources of stress to focus your efforts.
4. Learn – Strengthen the coping skills you already have and learn two or three new strategies to help you acclimatize to future stressful situations.
5. Plan – Develop a plan that has a series of very specific things you can do to manage your stress – this will help you stay on track and evaluate your successes.
6. Act – Just do it! Experiment with your new ideas at least twice. Be gentle on yourself if you aren't successful on your first attempt. Try again!

Remember: Evaluate regularly so you can determine what is working, and gauge your overall stress management performance. Also, it is absolutely key to celebrate your successes!

Adapted from Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa-Carleton

## Fun Facts for Shiftworkers

### JUST BREATHE!

Did you know that one of the simplest things you can do to enhance your ability to cope with stress is to BREATHE? Your body commonly reacts to stress by restricting the quality of your breathing. Rapid and shallow breathing doesn't allow your blood to receive the amount of oxygen that it needs to effectively oxygenate your brain and internal organs. This forces your heart to beat faster and ultimately can lead to high blood pressure and other chronic diseases. A brain that is oxygen deprived can cause a person to feel foggy, negative, and depressed.

The good news is that you CAN change your response to stress by tuning into your breathing pattern. To start, try this easy and fast stress management breathing exercise at least three times a day:

1. Sit down
2. Inhale slowly and say to yourself I am...
3. Exhale slowly and say to yourself relaxed.

This breathing technique can be done almost anytime and anywhere without being visible to anyone. You'll minimize the negative impacts of stress on your body and be more apt to face situations with a clear head and calmer nerves!

Adapted from Team Chrysalis – Stress Buster!

