

# Tips for Stress Management

## HANDLING STRESS

- Replace negative thoughts (“I can’t; it’s impossible”) with positive thoughts (“I can! I’m worth it”)
- Keep things in perspective.
- Spend time with people who make you laugh, or listen to a funny radio program.
- Take a 10-minute break to be by yourself and collect your thoughts.
- Try a relaxation technique like meditation, prayer or yoga.
- Breathe in and out slowly and deeply from your belly.
- When we are stressed, our muscles usually get tight. To cope with this response to stress, make sure your shoulders are relaxed and away from your neck. Shake your arms, neck and head gently to loosen tight muscles.

## REDUCING STRESS

Ways to reduce your stress include:

- Taking daily time to relax
- Taking time to do the things you enjoy
- Developing long and short-term goals
- Spending time with your friends and family
- Learning to say “no”
- Trying not to procrastinate
- Helping other people and asking people for help
- Eating a healthy, well balanced diet (people often fall back on unhealthy behaviors when under stress—but it only causes more stress!)
- Not smoking
- Getting enough sleep
- Limiting caffeine
- Practicing stress reduction exercises (ex. breathing)
- Getting regular exercise:
  - Doing strength exercises at home (no need to join a gym!)
  - Going on a walk and relaxing in a park
  - Stretching when your muscles are warmed up (this also helps you stay flexible so you don’t get hurt when you exercise or do other activities.
  - Practicing yoga (you can borrow DVDs from the public library)