Stress Busters

The following are some techniques you can use to cope with stress.

Get organized - Plan, schedule, take notes, and keep good records. For example, use a calendar, computer software organizer, or write out a "to do" list. Organizing the details of your daily life reduces stress. Save your memory for more creative and pleasurable activities.

Rehearse (visualize) - When you know that you are going to face a stressful situation, rehearse how you are going to handle it. Picture yourself overcoming it successfully. Create a mental "videotape" that you can play over and over in your mind. This technique reinforces your successfully overcoming any anticipated stressful situation. Rehearsing through visualization will reduce the amount of stress that normally accompanies an event, just as the Olympic athlete does when they are preparing for an event or competition. He or she rehearses the event focusing on the difficult tasks ahead. This mentally prepares the athlete prior to competition. Try practicing how to handle specific stressful situations. It works!

Do it now - Do your most unpleasant or most difficult task at the beginning of the day when you are fresh, thereby avoiding the stress of last minute preparation. Procrastination feeds stress!

Know your limits - Be realistic about what you can accomplish in a day. It's better to emphasize quality in your work, rather than sheer quantity. Careful scheduling of tasks will level those stressful peaks and valleys. Planning goals and objectives allows you to meet them more realistically. If you are new at goal-setting, ask someone who is experienced.

Schedule your stress - Scheduling your stressful activities can reduce the number of stressors you must juggle at any one time. Don't set identical deadlines for major projects. Schedule some "breathing" space that will allow you time for "recharging" and creative thinking. You'll also be better prepared when an unanticipated task arrives.

Treat your body right - You will have more self-confidence and energy, and be less likely to experience the physical side effects of stress when you eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep and exercise regularly.

Positive Self-Talk - One of the first things you can do in facing stressful situations is to reinforce your resolve through positive statements such as, "I can handle this, one step at a time," or "Since I've been successful with this before, there's no reason why I can't do it again".

Take Charge - Take responsibility for making your life what you want it to be. It is less stressful to make decisions and take action than to feel powerless and react to other's decisions. Decide what you want and go for it!

Develop a Sense of Humor - One of the barriers to stress reduction is the temptation to take things too seriously. It's okay to back off from your intensity and see the humor in life's situations. Laugh a little.

http://chaplaincare.navy.mil/selfhelp/stressbuster.htm