

# For Your Health

## Stress Management

**At Aetna, we believe there is nothing more important than your health. That's why we're pleased to give you information to help you manage your health.**

**Read on to learn more.**

### Stress Management Techniques

You're at your wit's end. All day your boss was on the warpath, and all night your kids screamed and fought with one another. Now it's 10 p.m., and there are piles of bills on the counter and dishes in the sink, but all you want to do is relax. You plop yourself in your favorite chair, reach for the remote and start surfing.

Sound familiar? Playing couch potato is one of the most common responses to stress. But it's not necessarily an effective one. In fact, most stress-management experts say

real stress reduction requires more skill — and discipline — than flipping on the television. For example, it requires participating in a daily exercise regimen, expressing your emotions, socializing, performing relaxation exercises and eating a healthy diet.

None of these methods may entirely eliminate your stress, but what stress reduction can help you do is balance your stress with more positive experiences to help you maintain a healthy mind and body.

Research shows that practicing stress management is not merely about helping you live a more pleasant life. It also can help you live a longer one.

### How to Determine Your Personal Stressors

As obvious as it sounds, stopping to think about what stresses you can help you cope — for several reasons:

- First, uncovering the roots of your stress gives you the information you need to avoid the stressful situation, if that is what you want to (and can) do.

- Second, knowing the sources of your feelings makes you feel more in control, and feeling more in control generally helps lessen stress.
- Finally, recognizing that the cause of your behavior is stress, not something else, can reduce your anxiety about the behavior itself.

To identify the source of your stress and its severity, see **The Stress Scale**.

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