

TIPS FOR REDUCING STRESS

- 1. Learn to plan.** Disorganisation can breed stress. Having too many projects going simultaneously often leads to confusion, forgetfulness, and the sense that uncompleted projects are hanging over your head. When possible, take on projects one at a time and work on them until completed.
- 2. Recognise and accept limits.** Most of us set unreasonable and perfectionistic goals for ourselves. We can never be perfect, so we often have a sense of failure or inadequacy no matter how well we perform. Set **achievable** goals for yourself.
- 3. Learn to play.** You need occasionally to escape from the pressures of life and have fun. Find pastimes which are absorbing and enjoyable to you no matter what your level of ability is.
- 4. Be a positive person.** Avoid criticising others. Learn to praise the things you like in others. Focus upon the good qualities those around you possess.
- 5. Learn to tolerate and forgive.** Intolerance of others leads to frustration and anger. An attempt to really understand the way other people feel can make you more accepting of them.
- 6. Avoid unnecessary competition.** There are many competitive situations in life that we can't avoid. Too much concern with winning in too many areas of life can create excessive tension and anxiety, and make us unnecessarily aggressive.
- 7. Get regular physical exercise.** Check with your physician before beginning any exercise program. You will be more likely to stay with an exercise program if you choose one that you really enjoy rather than one that feels like pure hard work and drudgery.
- 8. Learn a systematic, drug-free method of relaxing.** Meditation, yoga, autogenic training or progressive relaxation can be learned from various accredited teachers and licensed psychotherapists.
- 9. Talk out your troubles.** Find a friend, member of the clergy, counsellor, or psychotherapist you can be open with. Expressing "bottled up" tension to a sympathetic ear can be incredibly helpful.
- 10. Change your thinking.** How we feel emotionally often depends on our outlook or philosophy of life. Changing one's beliefs is a difficult and painstaking process. There is little practical wisdom in the modern world to guide us through our lives. No-one has all the answers, but some answers are available.

