

When you read over the plan, you'll notice that you can come up with several ideas for each point. **PLEASE do not think you should try them all.** This plan is supposed to help you reduce stress, not give you more. Try out some ideas, then stick to one or two ideas for each point.





Part 1: Tackling the Problem

Point 1: Figure out what the problem is and make it manageable.

- A lot of people deal with problems by ignoring them. This does not make them go away; usually they just get worse.
- People who try to fix their problems tend to be emotionally healthier.
- When it comes to work (like studying or chores), the best way to enjoy yourself is to get the work done first. Sometimes people say they will do fun things first and do their work later, but the problem is they're having less fun because they're worrying about the work they're ignoring. And of course, the longer they put it off, the more they worry.
- Fights with parents and friends don't go away unless you deal with what upset you in the first place, or unless everyone says they're sorry and decides to forgive each other.

Two ideas can help you manage a lot of work.

1. Break the work into small pieces.  Then just do one small piece at a time, rather than look at the whole huge mess. As you finish each piece, the work becomes less overwhelming.

2.  Make lists of what you need to do. This will help you sleep because your head won't spin with worry about whether you can do everything. At the end of the day, you will have less to worry about as you check off the things you have finished. You will look at the same huge amount of homework and say to yourself, "I can do this!"

Point 2: Avoid things that bring you down.

Sometimes we know exactly when we are headed for trouble. Avoiding trouble from a distance is easier than avoiding it up close. You know the people who might be a bad influence on you. You know the places where you're likely to get in trouble. You know the things that upset you. Choose not to be around those people, places, and things that mess you up.

Point 3: Let some things go.

It's important to try to fix problems, but sometimes there's nothing you can do to change a situation. For example, you can't change the weather, so don't waste your energy worrying about it. You can't change the fact that teachers must give tests, so start studying instead of complaining about how unfair they are. You can't control what admissions committees do behind closed doors, so after you've sent in your applications, just let it go. People who waste their energy worrying about things they can't change don't have enough energy left over to fix the things they can.



Stress Plan for Teens

Now that you have read about lots of ways to manage stress, you may be ready to create a plan for yourself. Just check off the ones you think would work best for you. There are spaces for you to write down your own ideas.

Part 1: Tackling the Problem

Point 1: Figure out what the problem is and make it manageable.

When I have too many problems, I will work on just one at a time. For example, I am going to pick one huge problem and break it into smaller pieces.

Problem: _____

How can I make this manageable? _____

Point 2: Avoid things that bring me down.

I know that everyone has stress, but there are things that I could stay away from that really stress me out. I will:

- Avoid certain people, like: _____
- Avoid certain places, like: _____
- Avoid certain things, like: _____

Point 3: Let some things go.

I realize that I waste some of my energy worrying about things I can't fix. Here are some things that I will try to let go so I can focus on the problems I can change:

- A.
- B.
- C.