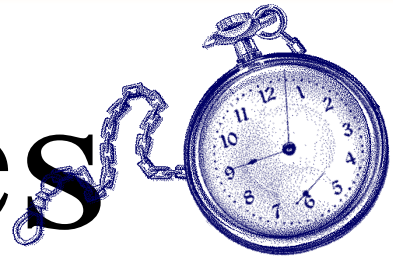
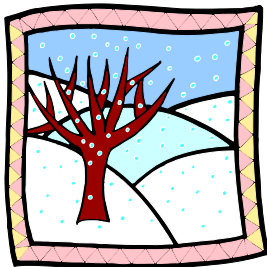


# LifeTimes



A quarterly publication to enhance the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities

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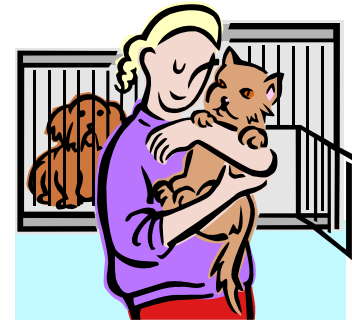
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## NUTRITION & HEALTH

# 5 tips to de-stress your life

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In today's world, it's easy to become overwhelmed and overstressed by the numerous demands of daily life.

Short-term periods of stress can cause an increase in blood pressure, headaches, trouble sleeping, and more. However, chronic stress and worrying are much more serious health concerns, as they can lead to insomnia, weight gain, depression, and even more serious complications with diabetes, heart disease, or other chronic conditions.

Using simple techniques to calm and de-stress your daily life will help you to respond to both minor and more serious stressful situations in a healthier way. Here are some suggestions.

- 1. Take a breath.** Taking a deep breath is one of the quickest and simplest strategies to use when feeling stressed. It doesn't require special equipment; it can be done any time, any place. Focusing your mind on breathing brings you into the present and provides a moment of peace.
- 2. Say "Yes" to you.** This involves doing something *you* take pleasure in. It can be as simple as spending a few minutes playing with a pet, talking to a

friend, or playing an instrument. If you're looking for ideas, start by making a *Joy List*. Ask yourself, "If I had no obligations today, what would I do?" Then write everything that comes to your mind for the next three minutes. Use this list for ideas on how to say "yes" to yourself.

- 3. Be aware.** Become aware of what your body is trying to tell you during a stressful situation. Notice your thoughts, feelings, and body sensations. Next time you are stuck in a traffic jam, notice how your body reacts. Does your mind start to race, thinking about all the things you could be doing instead of sitting in traffic? Do you feel yourself getting angry or annoyed? As you become more aware, notice as your reaction to the stress begins to change.
- 4. Choose physical activity that fits you.** Physical activity can improve your mood and physical health. It can even help you sleep better. However, it is crucial to choose the activity that fits your needs. Do you prefer being active outside or indoors? If you like

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## HOME &amp; GARDEN

# WaterSense: Making every drop count

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You can save water and energy, help the environment and keep money in your pocket with a few changes to use water more efficiently.

WaterSense—an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program that seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply—estimates the average American household spends up to \$500 per year on water and sewer bills. A few easy changes could save you about \$170 per year.

One of the easiest ways to save water is to install water-efficient products. The EPA WaterSense label helps you select water-efficient faucets, showerheads and toilets that are independently certified to use at least 20 percent less water and perform as well as, or better than, less efficient products.

WaterSense offers the following facts and simple steps to help you start saving water today. It's as easy as *check, twist* and *replace*.

- **Check** for leaks. A leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons of water a day. To check if your toilet has a leak, place a drop of food coloring in the tank and wait 10 minutes. If the color shows in the bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Fixing the leak may be as simple as replacing the toilet's flapper.
- **Twist** on a WaterSense-labeled bathroom faucet aerator to use 30

percent less water without a noticeable difference in flow.

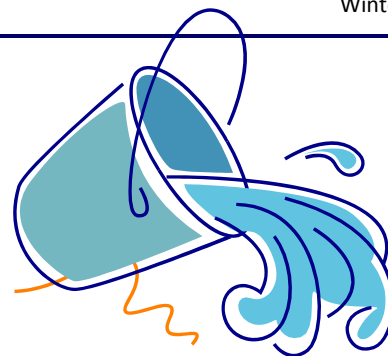
- **Replace** a showerhead with a WaterSense-labeled model that uses 20 percent less water, but provides strong flow and spray. In a year, you could save more than 2,300 gallons and up to 300 kilowatt hours on water heating. If every U.S. household installed

**A faucet leak of one drip per second can waste over 3,000 gallons of water per year.**

WaterSense showerheads, in one year we could save over 250 billion gallons of water and about \$2.5 billion in energy costs for heating the water.

## Benefits of water efficiency

- **Save money.** If every household installed WaterSense faucets, showerheads and toilets, the country would save more than 3 trillion gallons of water and more than \$18 billion dollars a year by reducing the need for costly water infrastructure and treatment plants.
- **Save energy.** It takes energy to heat water; it also takes a lot of energy to treat and deliver water for U.S. households, enough electricity to power more than 5 million homes for a year.



- **Help the environment.** If one in every 100 American homes replaced old fixtures with ones that were energy efficient, savings of 100 million kilowatt hours of electricity per year would save 80,000 tons of greenhouse gases, equivalent to removing 15,000 cars from the road for a year.

To learn how much water you can save by installing WaterSense products, visit [www.epa.gov/WaterSense/calculate\\_your\\_water\\_savings.html](http://www.epa.gov/WaterSense/calculate_your_water_savings.html). Resource: [www.epa.gov/watersense/](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/)

## Did you know?

- **Don't flush money down the drain!** Toilets use the most water in the home. Toilets made before 1992 probably use at least 3.5 to 7 gallons per flush. WaterSense toilets use less than 1.28 gallons per flush, saving a family of four more than \$90 annually.
- **Small leaks add up quickly.** A faucet leak of one drip per second can waste over 3,000 gallons of water per year. An average home wastes over 10,000 gallons of water a year due to dripping faucets and other leaks, enough to fill a backyard swimming pool.
- **Turn it off!** An average bathroom faucet flows at a rate of two gallons per minute. Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth to save some 8 gallons per day or 240 gallons a month.

## FAMILY LIFE

# Positive parenting skills: Think before you act

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Have you ever reacted to your child's behavior without taking time to discover from your child why that behavior occurred? Many times parents react to the negative behavior of a child without understanding the child's perspective. The way the parent "sees," defines, or describes a behavior often limits the solutions considered.

The stress associated with trying to balance work and family goes across all social and economic levels. Sometimes we get tied up with day-to-day "stuff." At times by the end of the day, we may just be tired and make a mistake. Most parents have not participated in a "Parenting" class; we usually learn how to parent from our experience within our families or from trial and error. Positive parenting skills can be learned, but it does take time and some effort.

As an example: My mother raised seven children by herself during the Depression after my father died suddenly. She had to go to work to make ends meet. Balancing work and family wasn't easy, but I believe she did the best she could under the circumstances.

As a child about the age of 10 or 11, I decided one day to make a flower garden by the back door of our home. I spent the entire day digging and weeding and planting some seeds I had found. I was very proud of the little garden I had created, looking forward to the flowers I hoped would grow. At the end of the day I

went into the house to get a drink of water after all my hard work.

I remember standing on a chair to reach the kitchen cabinet to get the glass. While standing on the chair, my mother entered the kitchen from her work day and asked angrily, "Who dug the hole in the back yard"? In my mind I had not dug a HOLE, I had made a GARDEN. She repeated her question several times, when finally my sister pointed to me and said that I had dug the hole. My mother took it that I had lied to her, and I received a whipping for what in her mind was wrong.

**The stress associated with trying to balance work and family goes across all social and economic levels.**

I share this event as I present Parenting Education classes and relate it to the concept of perception. My mother and I were on different paths. Many times parents are too busy to take the time to look beyond the behavior, yet if the time was spent, different solutions and responses may evolve.

Following are some adapted positive parenting tips from a University of Minnesota Extension parenting guide that can help you help your child learn how to behave better in the future.

**1. Think before you react.** Remember self-esteem is fragile.



- 2. Listen to what your child says.** Do not lecture.
- 3. Make a habit to apologize when you make a mistake.** Your children will pick up that habit.
- 4. Pick your battles.** Big deal or small deal? What is really important?
- 5. Avoid power struggles.** Choose the power to be a positive influence with your child.
- 6. Use mistakes to teach.** Share mistakes you've made and how you learned from them.
- 7. Try to understand your child's perspective.** Their point of view may be different from yours.
- 8. Time is precious.** Spend time getting to know your children and letting them know you.
- 9. Celebrate!** When your children do something right, let them know how proud you are of them.
- 10. Love your child.** Think positively and expect the best from him/her.

Resource: Pitzer, R. L. (2003). *A Parent's Guide to Teens: The Growing Season*. University of Minnesota Extension. Available at [www.extension.umn.edu/](http://www.extension.umn.edu/)

# 5 tips to de-stress your life

(continued from page 1)

being outside, joining a gym isn't right for you. Look back at failed exercise attempts. What were you trying to do that didn't work? Tune into yourself and your needs.



## 5. Make a "Life is too short to..." list.

In two minutes, list everything that your life is too short to waste your time doing.

Examples: reading junk mail, spending more time cleaning up after your kids than playing with them, etc. Revise your list if needed.

Make sure you do things that matter to *you*. Long-term stress often results from spending too much time doing unimportant things and not enough time doing things you care about.

Source: MU Extension's *Taking Care of You—Body, Mind, and Spirit* curriculum. See class schedule at [extension.missouri.edu/stlouis](http://extension.missouri.edu/stlouis).

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## PERSONAL FINANCE

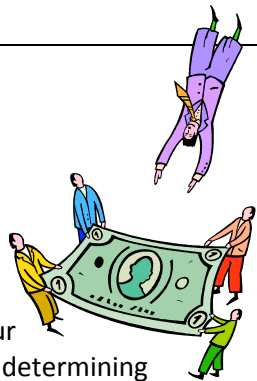
# What's your net worth?

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Doing a *net worth statement* each year is crucial to your financial health. People get intimidated by the idea of determining net worth because they don't want to see negative results. I compare it to getting on a scale – just because you avoid getting on the scale does not change your weight. It's the same with money; you are where you are financially if you write it down or not. Here's how to determine your net worth.



1. Write down the value of everything you own.
2. Then subtract from that amount everything you owe  
(Assets – Debts = Net Worth).
3. Use that information to create strategies to get where you want to be.

A net worth statement is a tool you should use annually to compare where you are from past to present and to make sure you're headed in the right direction. If you find your debt growing and your savings shrinking for reasons other than school loans or a mortgage, it gives you a chance to stop negative behavior. Then you can figure out how to turn it around, such as spending less and saving more. For a free Net Worth Statement form, visit the *LifeTimes* Web site (Winter 2011):

[extension.missouri.edu/ecregion/lifetimes](http://extension.missouri.edu/ecregion/lifetimes).