



# Stand Up Against Stressors: Wellness Tools That Really Work

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While families are staying inside to prevent the spread of COVID-19, it's likely that parents will experience additional stressors than usual. In order for parents to uphold healthy and safe lifestyles for their families, they must practice maintaining their own wellness first! Use the wellness strategies below to stand up against the stressors in your life that you can control.

## Minimize the Stressors

Think about the things that you have control over, and how they impact the stress in your life. Is there a way to cut back on the amount of responsibilities that you currently have? Will turning off the news temporarily and eliminating social media decrease your stress?



## Balance Your Social Interactions

Be strategic about reaching out to the people in your life who build you up and are able to sympathize and listen. Also, when you have time or an extra hand to give, provide someone in your life with practical help such as a written card, baked goods on their front porch, or a simple uplifting text message. These types of good deeds will pour into your own positive emotions. Remember to take a step back or put a pause on relationships in your life that continuously emotionally overwhelm you.

## Fuel Your Body with Good Nutrition

Practice fueling your body with a variety of fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, and proteins that are filled with nutrients to provide yourself more energy to fight off all of life's extra challenges. Avoid using substances, such as alcohol, which can cause serious health effects.



## Relax Your Muscles

Is your body telling you that your muscles need a break? Make an effort to start stretching, taking a short walk, or drawing a warm bath.



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## Practice Meditation

Set aside five minutes of your day to sit in a quiet place and just breathe. Keep your mind focused on the present moment. If thoughts come into your mind, acknowledge them, and then let them go. Let your mind bring attention on the present moment.



## Get Some Sleep

Keep a consistent sleep routine that includes wind down time before heading off to bed. This is a great time for your dose of daily meditation. Remember, limit your caffeine and alcohol intake in the afternoon through the evening hours, and eliminate electronics an hour before sleep to let your mind prepare for a good nights rest.

## Move Your Body

Add 30 minutes of physical activity to your daily routine. Think about how can you make your exercise enjoyable. Have a dance party in the living room, or toss on some headphones and go on a brisk nature walk around your neighborhood.



## Take a Moment in Nature

Green space improves your mood! Take a moment each day to notice the nature around you. It can refocus your busy thoughts and calm your mind.

## Maintain Your “Me” Time

Make time each day to do something for yourself, whether that means reading a chapter of your favorite novel, singing along to your favorite tunes, playing with your pets, or streaming your favorite show on Netflix. Laughter can provide worthwhile benefits to both your mental and physical health.





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## Reframe Your Thinking

If you notice yourself spiraling into imagining worst-case scenarios, or you feel your negative thoughts overcoming you... STOP and put your mind elsewhere. Visualize those negative thoughts flying right out the window! Set realistic expectations for yourself. Strive to accept situations outside of your control and manage the things that you can control... Such as, your own wellness strategies!



## Reach Out for Help

If you feel overwhelmed and your self-help strategies are not working, know that you are not alone. Look for a psychologist or another mental health provider who can help you learn how to manage your stress more successfully.

Reference: <https://www.apa.org/topics/stress-tips>

**PRACTICE PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

- ELBOW**  
Cough into it
- HANDS**  
Wash them often
- FACE**  
Don't touch it
- FEEL SICK?**  
Stay home

**KEEP YOUR DISTANCE**  
Stay more than 6 feet apart

ASERT PAautism.org  
Pennsylvania's leading source of autism-related resources and information.