

Journey to Wellness — A free self-guided healthy living program

Create a resilient mindset



Life is different for each of us, yet we all share the experience of stress or stressors that affect our livelihood, health and well-being. Our reactions to stress can differ each time it occurs, sometimes leading to rumination, uncertainty or unhealthy behaviors. **Resilience is the ability to adapt well** when faced with challenges, tragedy, threats, significant stress or trauma, showing positive responses to challenging situations.

Why is resilience important?

Resilience means being able to cope with tough events. When you have resilience, you harness the inner strength that helps you rebound from a setback or challenge, such as a job loss, an illness, a disaster or a loved one's death. If you lack resilience, you might get stuck on problems, feel like a victim or turn to unhealthy ways to cope.

Resilience can help protect you from mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety. It also can help you deal with things that increase the risk of mental health conditions, such as being bullied or having trauma.

What techniques are available to build and practice resilience?

To get the most benefit, use relaxation techniques along with these other positive coping methods:

- Think positively.
- Find humor.
- Solve problems.
- Manage time and priorities.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Get enough sleep.
- Spend time outside.
- Reach out to supportive family and friends.

Mayo Clinic also provides several resources, including videos and descriptions, to continue building and garnering a resilient mindset. Try these techniques to help yourself, a family member or a child:

- 1 **Progressive muscle relaxation.** In progressive muscle relaxation, you focus on slowly tensing and then relaxing each muscle group.

This can help you focus on the difference between muscle tension and relaxation. You can become more aware of physical sensations.

In one type of progressive muscle relaxation, you start to tense and relax the muscles in your toes. You gradually work your way up to your neck and head. This is best done in a quiet area without interruptions. You also can start with your head and neck and work down to your toes. Tense your muscles for about five seconds, then relax for 30 seconds, and repeat.

- 2 **Visualization.** In visualization, you may form mental pictures to take a visual journey to a peaceful, calming place or situation.

To relax using visualization, try using as many senses as possible, such as smell, sight, sound and touch. If you imagine relaxing at the ocean, think about the smell of salt water, the sound of crashing waves and the feel of the warm sun on your body.

You may want to close your eyes and sit in a quiet spot. Loosen any tight clothing and focus on your breathing. Aim to focus on the present and think positive thoughts.

Other resilience and relaxation techniques:

- Aromatherapy.
- Biofeedback.
- Deep breathing.
- Hydrotherapy.
- Massage.
- Meditation.
- Music and art therapy.
- Tai chi.
- Yoga.

Information adapted from "9 ways you can tame anxiety", "Build skills to endure hardship" and "Relaxation techniques: Try these steps to lower stress."

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