

Is Stress Breaking Your Heart?

You may have thought life would get easier once you hit retirement. How wonderful would life be without the stresses of a daily job, leaving you more time to do what you please. Then retirement arrived and you realized that your reasons for being stressed have shifted. You worry about whether your retirement fund is sufficient for your needs. You worry about the loss of loved ones as you get older. Maybe you're stressing over the choice between transitioning from living in your own home to moving into a senior living facility.

Stress is a part of life that cannot be avoided. The [American Psychological Association](#) reveals in a 2012 study that 22% of Americans are highly stressed . High stress levels can trigger unhealthy habits like overeating, missing sleep, and smoking, just to name a few. It is how you choose to manage your stress that can make all the difference in your heart health.

While you can't always control the stress that comes into your life, there are some things you can do to keep stress from taking over. Here are 5 activities that can help decrease your stress levels and lower your risk for heart disease.

1. Engage in a hobby. Keep your mind on being productive.
2. Find exercise you enjoy like yoga, walking in nature, or dancing.
3. Solve puzzles. Crossword puzzles, Scrabble, and Sudoku can help to keep your memory sharp.
4. Be social. Making connections with new and old friends is great for keeping your mind off stress.
5. Laughter is the best medicine. Make the time to laugh with friends, find your favorite comedians on DVD, or read books that tickle your funny bone.

Be Savvy! Learn to recognize the [signs and symptoms of stress](#) before it wreaks havoc on your heart health.