

# DIFFERENT WAYS TO HANDLE STRESS

Coping tools or skills are the things you do to handle stress. Some of them are automatic, and it's easy to get into ruts. It's normal for things to change over time, and for coping tools to stop working as well. Examples of this include stress or comfort eating that used to work fine, but now feels less healthy or leads to weight gain. Plus, that type of coping (passive coping) doesn't really handle the stress directly. Take stock and update your coping toolbox for the best results. Note which tools are active (facing stress directly) or more passive (putting it off or avoiding it for now). Try new things, be more conscious with passive coping, and add daily destress experiments. The more the merrier with coping tools!

## **The Good**

Ask a friend  
Keep a journal  
Relax your head and neck muscles  
Run / exercise  
Dance / move / stretch  
Help someone else  
Daydream  
Cry  
Read a book  
Play hard  
Create something  
Clean your house  
Write a letter  
Say no  
Say yes  
Make a list  
Get/give a massage  
Go for a walk  
Listen to music  
Play an instrument  
Talk to someone  
Play  
Surprise someone with a note  
Set some goals  
Rearrange a room or office  
Dig in the mud  
Plant something  
Yell in your Pillow

## **The Bad**

Eat something  
Have a cigarette  
Put someone down  
Go to sleep  
Keep yourself too busy  
Watch TV  
Make an excuse  
Withdraw  
Pout  
Pretend  
Hurt someone  
Keep it all inside  
Break something  
Gossip  
Overwork  
Spiral out with thoughts  
Add drama to emotions or challenges  
Avoid facing what needs facing

## **The Ugly**

Take a drink  
Take a pill  
Steal something  
Try to kill yourself or anything  
Lie  
Drive too fast  
Yell at people you care about

*Thanks to Janet D. Somers, MSW, LCSW,  
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