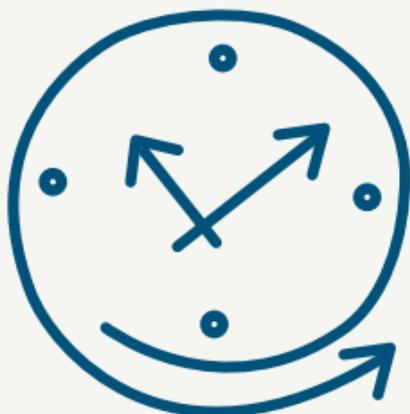


# HOW TO COPE WITH STRESS

by Lisa Damour, PhD

Under stress, we instinctively seek ways to cope. But not all coping is created equal. Unhealthy coping strategies may provide short-term emotional relief but lead to problems down the line. Healthy coping techniques, on the other hand, offer immediate relief and can be sustained over time.



UNHEALTHY COPING	HEALTHY COPING
<p><b>WITHDRAWAL and/ or IRRITABILITY</b> Avoiding others or pushing them away provides quick emotional relief but harms important relationships.</p>	<p><b>SOCIAL CONNECTION</b> Positive interpersonal relationships reduce anxiety, improve mood, and boost immune functioning.</p>
<p><b>SUBSTANCE MISUSE</b> Using drugs or alcohol can blunt emotional distress, but doing so quickly becomes destructive.</p>	<p><b>ENGAGING DISTRACTIONS</b> Periodic mental vacations - such as getting lost in a book, doing absorbing work, or spending time in nature - offer essential breaks from stress.</p>
<p><b>JUNK HABITS</b> Excessive couch-surfing, comfort food consumption, or late night scrolling trades short-term relief for long-term problems.</p>	<p><b>CONCIENTIOUS SELF-CARE</b> Prioritizing sleep, physical activity, and eating well allow us to sustain ourselves when stressed.</p>