



Stress Management Society
...from distress to de-stress

Tel: 08701 999 235 Email: info@stress.org.uk URL: www.stress.org.uk Shop: www.feelkarma.com

A TEN-STEP GUIDE TO COPE WITH STRESS FOR MUMS

1) Accept all offers of help

If you've just had a baby, say YES to all offers of help! Whether it's cooking you a meal to pop in the freezer, doing your shopping or taking the baby out for a stroll, accept accept accept. Time is short and your energy will flag. Helping hands will save you.

2) Get networking

There are many great ways to meet other mums. Join the NCT and go to their events. Ask the council for its list of local play groups. Join a child-related class such as baby massage or a children's gym. Even stop and talk to other mothers in the street or park.

3) Talk to others honestly

Think you have challenges as a mother? You'd be surprised how many others feel the same – even those with seemingly perfect lives and perfect kids. Don't compare yourself. But do share how you feel with a trusted circle of other mothers. They will soon remind you what you have to be grateful for.

4) Rely on your instincts

There is no right way to bring up kids. Just lots of different ways. It's whatever works for you. So be informed by reading up on issues or listening to people's advice, but make your decisions based on what feels right for you.

5) Draw up a budget

The most common worry for mothers is money. So get your facts straight. Do a household budget (there are some great templates on www.microsoft.com). Once you understand where your money goes you can start to make savings.

6) Avoid nicotine, alcohol and caffeine

These are all stimulants so will leave you more hyped up rather than calmer. If you're stressed steer well clear. Instead do your body a favour and drink water to keep you well hydrated.

7) Work off stress with physical activity

Pressure or anger releases adrenaline in the body. Exercise helps to reduce it, and produces 'good mood' substances in the brain. So walk the kids to their childminder or nursery. Or try driving just part of the way there and walking the rest. The exercise will do you good and teach your kids to be active.

8) Relax with a daily stress reduction technique

Try self-hypnosis. The Stress Management Society recommends courses in self-hypnosis and has CDs that will teach you the secrets of this technique. Visit www.feelkarma.com for details. Or think up a self-affirming mantra to repeat to yourself (eg 'I deserve calm in my life', or 'I have a choice in every situation'). Repeat it to yourself whenever you feel tense.

9) Get enough sleep

Sleep is essential for the body to function properly. Unfortunately it's often in short supply for mums. If you have a young baby, snatch cat naps where you can. If your children are older establish some ground rules about waking up the rest of the house, eg that if they wake early they shouldn't rouse Mummy, but stay in their rooms and read a book until at least 7am.

10) Say 'no' without guilt

Simple, but effective. Where a 'no' is the appropriate response to your child or to another adult, say it without guilt. It's your life, your time and your money – so it's your decision as to how to spend it. Adults will appreciate your honesty. Kids will learn some boundaries. And you keep control of your life.