Tips for Combating Stress

When it comes to stress triggers, everyone is different. In general, stress is caused when "stressors" outweigh you ability to cope. How you respond to stressful situations depends on several factors:

- Your perception of the situation
- Your ability to maintain a positive outlook during challenging times
- Your overall health and well-being (Sleeping and eating habits, level of physical activity, and overall health condition)

Stress and your health

Re-occurring stress can lead to frequent bouts of sickness. Additional side effects include: insomnia, poor eating habits, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Anxiety and depression are also caused by stress.

Stress left unchecked can negatively impact you physical and mental health. Taking the initiative to reduce and manage stress levels offers invaluable, long-term rewards. What follows are tips to help get you on your way:

Brain dump. Jot down all the things that cause you the most stress. Include each stressor's level using degrees from 1 to 10. Also, note how they affect you. Brain dumping as a stress releaser also includes taking your mental to-do lists and writing it down. Mental to-do lists take unnecessary effort to retain and add to stress levels.

Take a stand. Decide what you can control and what you can't. As for the things you can't control, decide how you are going to react to them. Better stated, make a commitment not to react in a manner that perpetuates stress. Additional tips include:

- Delegate more tasks to family members when possible
- Find ways to reward yourself for changes in behavior that reduce stress levels
- Take time to plan for things that are upcoming—having an organized action plan is a great way to feel accomplished and "ahead of the game"

Remember, it's okay to say, "No." Make the decision that you will no longer spread yourself too thin. Letting go of certain activities may make you feel a bit uneasy, but in time you'll get past that feeling. Overcome the "performance trap." Recognize if you have a tendency to find your self worth in other people's perception of how well you do a particular job. Perfection is an unrealistic goal. And people-pleasing 100% of the time is equally unrealistic.

Define your limits. Decide what matters most to you and prioritize. You'll find that some things simply don't fit. Let these things go and press on!