

Stress Plan

Planning ahead can help you manage the stress in your life. Break down your stressors (anything that causes you stress) into four types: those you can't change and must **ACCEPT**; those you can **AVOID**; those you can **ALTER**; and those you can **ADAPT** to. Fill in your Stress Plan by listing a stressor, then checking the appropriate box to indicate whether it's one you can alter, avoid, adapt to, or accept. In the last column, plan how you'll deal with the stressor using our tips or your own ideas. Try making a plan for just one stressor this week. You can tackle more later.

Stressor	Accept	Avoid	Alter	Adapt	How will you deal with it?

To **ACCEPT** a stressor:

- Join a support group.
- Take care of yourself physically.
- Talk to a trusted friend.
- Remind yourself of how you have coped with difficult situations in your past.

To **ALTER** a stressor:

- Turn off your email and instant messenger function.
- If your workload feels overwhelming, make a list of the most important tasks and tackle them in order.
- If an upcoming doctor or dentist visit is stressing you, talk to them beforehand and let them know you're nervous. They can often explain procedures to ease your mind, or even prescribe a mild tranquilizer to help you through your appointment.

To **AVOID** a stressor:

- Avoid traffic by leaving early for work or taking public transportation
- Try to control the channel of communication with extremely difficult people – stick to email, for instance, where you have time to compose your thoughts instead of being drawn into a verbal battle.
- Learn to say no when you're asked to do more than you can handle.

To **ADAPT** a stressor:

- Ask yourself if you really want to spend energy being stressed about it.
- Put the stressor into perspective by listing the positive things in your life.
- Will this stressor be important a year from now? If not, try to let it go.
- When you begin to feel stressed, practice your deep breathing exercises or visualize yourself somewhere calm and relaxing.
- Think before you react.