

Four tips to a stress-free me in 2015

In gauging the past year's stress, people need to review the triggers that can affect their overall wellbeing and ability to live a healthy and productive life and make a plan to change things in 2015.



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According to Graham Anderson, Principal Officer and CEO at Profmed, stress is one of the main contributing factors of illness in the lives of professionals. "The new year presents the perfect opportunity to consider decompressing and getting your stress levels under control. While stress will always be a part of our lives, there are a number of things we can do to alleviate this."

He notes that a number of factors exist that add substantially to the stress levels of professionals. "The company's annual Stress Index, which collected data from over 3000 of South Africa's professionals, revealed that in 2014 40% of respondents ranked family as the leading cause of stress, with 27% citing health, 17% work and 16% citing financial issues as their leading cause of stress."

Four healthy tips

1. **Keep on moving:** Research has shown that almost any form of physical activity serves as a stress reliever. Make it a priority to keep active whether it is by joining a gym or taking regular walks in your neighbourhood. This will help refocus your thoughts, in turn positively affecting your mood, allowing you to approach your day rationally - 38% of respondents credited exercise as their best coping mechanism to stress.
2. **Get social:** In some instances, people tend to become reclusive when suffering from stress. Reaching out to friends and family through social events, networking and making connections serves as a great distraction, taking your mind off stressful issues and providing relief - 17% of respondents said that speaking to someone also aids in relieving their stress.
3. **Take up a hobby:** Whether it be playing an instrument, taking up a sport or entering quiz nights, extra-curricular activities require your full attention. Focusing your mind on what you are doing rather than residual stress from other areas of life has a therapeutic and calming effect.
4. **Adequate sleep does wonders:** A common consequence of stress is that of sleep loss. Lack of sleep can lead to trouble in concentration, which threatens your productivity and health. It is therefore, of the utmost importance that you get enough sleep, as this is your bodies chance to recharge.

"The above are just a few key elements that people can implement in their day-to-day lives to make sure that their stress remains at a manageable level. Studies such as the Stress Index Survey will continue to provide us with further insight on what causes our stress, how our stress is managed, and what can be done to better combat the consequences it has on our wellbeing," concludes Anderson.

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