

using ROUTINES TO MAINTAIN STRESS



Often when are we stressed we feel out of control. On the opposite side, a routine makes us feel the most in control. An established routine is the release valve that puts a structure in place to help you eliminate the stress.

Below are some guidelines for establishing a successful routine.

A routine defined by Webster's Dictionary is "a series of activities performed regularly."

- Routine behavior helps an individual feel like they have control over a situation.
- The first step to any routine is setting a goal. What does success look like and what do you want to accomplish?
 - One step at a time. Set small goals to reach a larger goal. This helps you maintain your stress level by moving toward your goal at a steady pace.
 - Taking small steps will provide perspective on the progress made and help you modify the timeline or goal when desired.
- Make the routine enjoyable. This helps provide the motivation and inspiration to do the work to reach the desired outcome.
- Schedule activities that help develop or maintain the desired routine.
- We all get interruptions from time to time. When this happens, take a deep breath, pause, reflect, regroup and get back on track.
- Enlist a friend to hold you accountable to your routine. An example may be an "Exercise Buddy."
- Are you concerned about establishing a new routine when you already have so much on your plate? The goal is to reduce your level of stress. Take a moment to review your schedule and determine what is manageable.
 - There is time that can be spared if your time is spent well.
 - Look for opportunities to replace one routine with another.
- Practice, Practice, Practice. Repetition creates routine. Take the necessary steps to continually repeat the routine for 60 days or until it becomes a habit.
- On an ongoing basis, reassess where you are with your routine. Make modifications as necessary.