Learning how to cope with stress is truly an art. It is a skill set that one needs to develop over time and constantly enhance to meet the demands of life today. Although you cannot completely eliminate stress, you can always learn to cope and make it work for you. It has been acknowledged that there are two forms of stress: positive and negative. The positive aspect would be that it increases your strength, energy, alertness and concentration. In contrast, if not managed carefully, it can decrease the level of your energy, weaken your immune system and cause serious illnesses. Fortunately, there are certain ways to get your stress under control.

First, you must be realistic and know your limitations, strengths and weaknesses. You may not always be successful, so do not be too disappointed with yourself if you cannot achieve certain goals in life. Next, is to adopt a problem-solving approach to life. This means that you should recognise that there are usually many ways to get something done, and some may simply involve more obstacles than others. So, you should try to find the best and easiest ways of overcoming your problems. Sharing your problems is another good way of overcoming stress. One should not keep their worries to themselves. You should talk to someone and you will definitely feel better after that. Besides, mutual support for each other will help you cope better with any challenges that life throws at you.

You can also reduce stress by organising your schedule. In your daily timetable, you should efficiently organise your time for work as well as for leisure. Setting priorities gives you a good idea of what is important and urgent, and which to attend to first. This leaves you with less important and easier tasks to perform in the later part of the day.

Another effective way to reduce stress is to build a happy home. Make your home a place you like to return to after a busy day. It is important to spend time to talk to, play and have quality time with your family. A good way would be to organise leisure events such as going out for dinners or movies. These activities can make you feel relaxed. Otherwise, strains in family relationships will become an added source of stress.

Staying healthy is equally important. You cannot enjoy life if your body is always unwell. Experts say that regular exercises such as jogging, swimming, and cycling can help boost your self-confidence and well-being. **Consistent** exercising can help reduce the tension and anxiety that lead to stress. It is also important for one to have sufficient rest and avoid staying up late, as well as eat an adequate and balanced diet. *line* 28

Finally, you should learn to relax. Learn to brighten your day, start a hobby or do something enjoyable. You should go for short holidays and go somewhere to rest. Learn to unwind at the end of the day, and you will sleep better and feel happier. In learning the steps to control and combat stress, you will learn how to embrace stress positively. Remember that successfully coping with stress will keep you healthy, happy and productive.

LIVEWORKSHEETS