



BONUS ARTICLE

Coping in a healthy way during the COVID-19 era

During a stressful time, the temptation to self-medicate with alcohol or drugs increases. As the COVID-19 pandemic places additional strain on everyday life, turning to healthier coping strategies is more important than ever.

When you feel stress levels increase:

- **Take some deep breaths.** Try breathing in for a count of five and then out for a count of five, or a little more slowly.
- **Stretch.** Release tension in your wrists, arms, and back.
- **Take a break.** Turn off the news and avoid social media.
- **Connect with a friend or coworker.** Talk about how you're feeling.
- **Do something you enjoy.** Go for a walk, do a puzzle, or shoot some hoops.

In addition, remember to take care of your body:

- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals,
- Exercise regularly, and
- Get at least seven hours of sleep per night.

Avoid turning to alcohol or drugs as a cure for stress. The negative effects of continued use and risk for dependence only make the problem worse. ♦

