Reflection: Enjoying participation in spiritual or religious activities, or simply taking time to reflect on the things that add meaning, purpose, and joy to your life helps to reduce the negative influence of stress on health.

Expectations: Being high in optimism, seeing the glass as half full rather than half empty helps to reduce the negative influence of stress on health.

Laughter: Having a sense of humor and being able to laugh at some of the things you do helps to reduce the negative influence of stress on health.

Acquaintances: Being socially active and spending time with people you enjoy being with helps to reduce the negative influence of stress on health.

Exercise: Being physically active (walking as often as you can) and not just sitting around watching television or playing games on a computer helps to reduce the negative influence of stress on health.
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- Your immune system works appropriately
  - reducing your risk of developing infectious disease
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- Focusing and thinking clearly is easier
General guidelines for a long and healthy life

Children should grow up in a socially stable society having role models that use healthy lifestyle behaviors. Young children do not know what healthy behaviors are. They learn from those they love. If the important adults in a child’s life use healthy behaviors, it is more likely that the child will grow up using those behaviors.
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Being part of a social network where you have others to talk to about personal issues, and with whom you engage in pleasurable activities so that your life is meaningful and interesting with goals that can be accomplished. You’re never too old and it’s never too late to increase your social interactions, and the returns can be significant in terms of life’s quality and quantity
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Being conscientious by striving to keep your life organized and productive.
What **stress** does to your body

**Body**
- Blood vessels become narrow, increasing blood pressure.
- Management of endocrine diseases, such as diabetes, is more difficult.
- Inflammation increases in the body. Inflammation is good when it helps to fight infections and heal wounds. However, excessive inflammation brought about by stress, will damage tissue and shorten a healthy life.

**Mind**
- Difficulty focusing and thinking clearly
- Increased risk of depression
- Memory difficulties
- Increased perception of pain

**Heart**
- Cholesterol accumulates more rapidly in the heart, narrowing blood vessels and decreasing the flow of oxygen to the heart.
- Risk of blood vessels in the heart becoming blocked increases, resulting in a heart attack.

**Immune system**
- Diseases caused by the immune system attacking the body get worse, examples include:
  - Multiple sclerosis
  - Rheumatoid arthritis
  - Psoriasis
- Resistance to infectious disease and healing of skin wounds decrease.
- Latent infections, such as herpes, may become active.

**Gastro-intestinal tract**
- Crohn’s disease
- Increased risk of ulcers
- Ulcerative colitis

Sources: Bruce S. Rubin, University of Pittsburgh
James Hilton/Post Gazette