



## Stress-eating: Four strategies to slow down

Carrying extra pounds puts a lot of stress on your back and contributes to back pain. Seeing your chiropractor is important, and so is not putting on extra weight. Weight gain has many underlying causes but one of the most common is something we all experience: stress. Whether it's the, mild temporary kind caused by a traffic jam or major and chronic, triggered by a traumatic life event — stress is no friend to your waistline. It can set off physical and emotional changes that drive you to eat more, crave less nutritious, fattening comfort foods — and even gain weight much more easily.

While stress is an inevitable part of life for many people, the weight gain that can accompany it isn't. Changing your response to stress and adopting strategies to reduce it can keep the numbers on your scale from moving in the wrong direction. These four strategies may help:

**Burn off tension.** Exercise is a crucial component of stress management, because physical activity can actually reduce cortisol levels. But you will find excuses to avoid workouts if you dread them. Finding an activity you love can help you maintain the regular physical activity you need in order to dissolve daily stress.

**Prioritize sleep.** A lack of sleep can increase the amount of stress hormones circulating in your body. So ensuring you get enough restful slumber is crucial to managing stress effectively. Avoid screen time at least an hour prior to bedtime. This includes your smartphone as the blue light emitted by smartphones can interfere with sleep.

**Change your outlook.** The amount of stress you feel is based on circumstances and your perception of those circumstances. Two people may do the same job, yet only one perceives it as stressful. People also vary in their ability to manage stress, based on personality or early life experiences. Working to change the way you think about challenges can help reduce stress.

**Talk to your chiropractor.** If you're having problems coping with stress or controlling emotional eating, talk to your doctor of chiropractic. He or she may be able to refer you to a health coach, support services, or an obesity specialist. It always helps to talk over a problem with a friend or trusted professional.



*This healthy living information is provided by your Doctor of Chiropractic  
and the Idaho Association of Chiropractic Physicians (IACP) .*