



WellNYS  
Everyday

# 2020 Monthly Challenge

Register at [wellnys.goer.ny.gov](http://wellnys.goer.ny.gov)

# April



## Practice managing stress.

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*In 2020, participate in THE THREE every day by doing the following:*

- 1) Practice the WellNYS Daily To-Do. If you'd like an extra challenge, try the "Go Beyond the Challenge" starting January 20th.
- 2) Check off that you did the Daily To-Do on the Monthly Challenge tracking form that can be found at [wellnys.goer.ny.gov/](http://wellnys.goer.ny.gov/).
- 3) Ask your wellness partner, did you do the WellNYS Daily To-Do?



# April WellNYS Daily To-Do

Once you've completed the To-Do, check the box!

**1**  The April Monthly Challenge is to practice managing stress. Register for the Monthly Challenge at [wellnys.goer.ny.gov](http://wellnys.goer.ny.gov).

**2**  According to the National Institute of Mental Health, here are five things you should know about stress: 1) stress affects everyone, 2) not all stress is bad, 3) long-term stress can harm your health, 4) there are ways to manage stress, and 5) if you're overwhelmed, ask for help from a health professional such as your EAP. For more information go to: [nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress/index.shtml](http://nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress/index.shtml).

**3**  On a scale of 1-10, with one being the lowest level of stress and 10 being the highest level of stress, what is your stress level today? What is causing your stress today? Can you give it a number between 1-10? Being aware of your stress level is the first step in changing it.

**4**  If you are experiencing a high level of stress, there is a course offered online and at many colleges and universities titled, "Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction" (MBSR), that teaches powerful techniques for managing stress. Check to see if this is available in your area.

**5**  Hobbies can be stress-reducing activities. What do you enjoy doing? Some people like to listen to music, read a book, knit, go fishing, go hunting, or build something out of wood. Whatever activity you enjoy, turn to it when you are feeling stressed.

**6**  If possible, take a day off and do something for yourself. Frequently, we use time off to take care of or support other people. Take a day off, and do something you love!

**7**  April is National Humor Month. Humor and laughter are some of the best ways to reduce stress. Watching a funny movie or sharing jokes with friends can bring your stress level down. Do you have a favorite joke to share today?

**8**  Go outside to reduce your stress. We spend so much time indoors; try going outside and experiencing nature. Every time you go outside the weather is different, from cold, to warm, to hot, to humid, to breezy, to sunny, to snowy, to perfect. Finding something you enjoy doing outdoors each day can reduce your stress.

**9**  According to the Mayo Clinic, positive thinking can help you manage your stress. Check in with yourself during the day to evaluate your thinking. If it's negative, try to put a positive spin on it.

**10**  Instead of mindlessly reaching for your phone today, sit quietly and just listen to your breathing. Let your mind rest from all that thinking and see if you feel less stressed.

**11**  A very pleasant way to reduce stress is to listen to your favorite music. Try to listen to the songs in a different way. Listen to the lyrics, or focus on the sound of the lead guitar, the bass guitar, or the drums, or any of the other instruments.

**12**  Minimize multi-tasking. To reduce your stress, try doing just one thing at a time.

**13**  Today, take a breathing break. Stretch out your hands. Take your pointer finger and touch your thumb and take a deep breath. Then take your middle finger and touch your thumb and take a breath. Continue with the other two fingers, and then open your hands and take a deep breath. Exhale slowly in between breaths.

**14**  Practice positive self-talk to reduce stress. Instead of saying, "I'm stressed," or, "I'm burnt out," shift your language to "I'm doing the best I can today."

**15**  Ask your wellness accountability partner if they are participating in the April Monthly Challenge, and ask what helps them manage stress and what they find "taxing."

**16**  Surround yourself with positive people. When you are stressed, it's helpful to reach out to the positive people in your life. Reach out to someone who makes you feel good.

**17**  Often, we think too much about what goes wrong and not enough about what goes right in our lives. What are you grateful for today? Name a person, a thing, or an experience that makes you feel good. Do you notice you feel less stressed when you think about positive things?

**18**  Create a happiness jar. Write down a happy experience or something you are grateful for on a piece of paper and put it in a happiness jar. It's the small moments that happen every day that can make us the happiest. When you are having a bad day, open the pieces of paper, and read what you wrote.

**19**  Learn something new today about the upside of stress at [health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/harnessing-the-upsides-of-stress](http://health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/harnessing-the-upsides-of-stress).

## GO BEYOND THE CHALLENGE

**20**  Your body was born to move, and exercising is such a great way to reduce stress. Take note of your stress level 1-10, and then do some moderate exercise. After 20 minutes, review your stress level again. Has it changed?

**21**  A habit is something that is performed without thinking about it. What stress-reducing activity can you make into a habit by practicing it every day? Physical activity, meditation, relaxing activities, or gratitude?

**22**  Take an inventory of your stress management tools. Do you consciously take a breath when your stress level rises suddenly? Do you have a physical activity to do when stressed? Do you practice mindfulness?

**23**  Small things can increase your energy, lift your mood, and put you in a better frame of mind. Here are five ideas to reduce stress: 1) exercise, 2) choose healthier foods, 3) avoid nicotine, 4) get enough sleep, & 5) get support from your accountability partner.

**24**  Eat your lunch or dinner somewhere pleasant today. Eat slowly and relax during your meal. Do you feel less stressed?

**25**  Take a simple ten-minute "thank you" walk each day and quietly think about what you are thankful for. Expressing gratitude can bring a sense of well-being to your busy workday and lessen your stress.

**26**  You can practice managing stress at any point in the day. First, close your eyes and take a deep breath. Next, practice being mindful by becoming aware of the present moment. Pay attention to your experience from moment to moment, with kindness, curiosity, and acknowledgement.

**27**  There are many ways to practice managing stress. With all the WellNYS Daily To-Do's this month, did any of the "to-dos" seem like something you could practice on a regular basis? Pick one and try it today.

**28**  Ask yourself, "Is your mind full or are you being mindful?" If your mind is full, then focus on the present moment.

**29**  Go Beyond the Challenge: Do you know the name of your EAP Coordinator? Stress is one of the top reasons NYS employees visit EAP. Go to the following website to find the coordinator at your agency/facility/SUNY: [goer.ny.gov/find-eap-coordinator](http://goer.ny.gov/find-eap-coordinator).

**30**  Today is the last day of April. Go to the WellNYS Everyday website at [wellnys.goer.ny.gov](http://wellnys.goer.ny.gov) and check off the days you participated in the Monthly Challenge.

Number of days completed