

Stress Management and Normal Routines

by Dr. Michael Nowazek

As covered in [previous articles](#), stress can have a big impact on your immune system so it's really helpful to have some stress management tools.

In stressful times such as periods of isolation or quarantine, it's important to maintain your regular routine as much as you can. A change in your normal routine is, by definition, stress. Stress can weaken your immune system.

Keeping to your regular routine will help to maintain your body's biorhythms as close to normal as possible which will enhance your ability to get good quality sleep. A good, solid sleep could go a long way to bolstering your immune system.

Here are some suggestions for helping to maintain your normal routine.

Get up at your usual time in the morning, do the usual things – eat, bathe, whatever you normally do. Your “getting up” routine will probably be a lot less rushed and therefore less stressful, which is a good thing.

If you're working from home, morning is a good time to do your work.

I'm strongly recommending to my patients that they shut down their electronic devices including news, media, social networking sites, etc. by noon. If you have to work on your computer into the afternoon, then continue but try to avoid social media, news, or anything else that involves spending too much time and energy on the stressful situation going on right now.

In the afternoon, focus on time for yourself – do your workout, get outside and go for a walk (maintaining social distancing, of course), work on your hobbies,

read a book, do something relaxing that you really enjoy. Have some “me time”. If you do want to watch some TV or movies, try to stay away from anything overstimulating like shows with violence or with an apocalyptic theme; those can be disturbing to sleep.

In the evening, try to get in some family time. You can do things like jigsaw puzzles or board games with the kids, read out loud to them. There's lots of things you can do, and in a future article, I'll share some of the activities that my wife and I have come up with for our family.

The basics are very simple – maintain your routine. Get up at the same time, do your normal morning activities, work through the morning, do afternoon activities that ideally are not work-related. If you have to work during the afternoon that's fine, but then switch your “me time” activities to the evening. Then in the evening, spend some time with family, do some reading, calm your mind down, work on your sleep, work on your relaxation techniques. Focus on trying to de-stress and relax. This can help you stay in a normal rhythm and get good quality sleep. That will help your stress management and will ideally help your immune system as well.

Even though our clinic is temporarily closed to help to flatten the coronavirus contagion curve, our doctors are still virtually available to patients via video and telephone. We are available to all of our patients with a virtual follow-up consultation so your care continues with little or no interruption. You can [book online](#) or call the office at (780) 485-9468.