

## How well do you handle stress in your life?

- I have people I confide in when I'm feeling under pressure who make me feel better.
- I feel comfortable expressing how I feel when something is bothering me.
- In general, I feel in control of my life and confident in my ability to handle what comes my way.
- I find reasons to laugh and feel grateful, even when going through difficulties.
- No matter how busy I am, I make it a priority to sleep, exercise, and eat right.
- I'm able to calm myself down when I start to feel overwhelmed.
- **Each "yes" answer represents an important stress coping skill. Each "no" represents an area to work on to become more resilient.**

## Strengthening Your Resilience

Think about a time you overcame a major obstacle. What strengths and skills helped you?

These are part of your natural resilience. And they're something you can build on.

**Resilience is the ability to push forward and adapt when things don't go as planned.** It means being able to overcome past hardships, keep going in the face of daily challenges, and bounce back when you face major setbacks.

These steps can help strengthen your resilience in the face of a challenge:

- **Tune in to your thoughts and beliefs.** How you think plays a big part in how you react to situations. Do your thoughts make you feel hopeful or hopeless?
- **Reach out.** Take time to strengthen your connections with loved ones or make new connections.
- **Pat yourself on the back.** A positive view of yourself is key. Take time to reflect on your strengths, skills, and accomplishments.
- **Think of one thing you can do.** Even in challenging situations, there's usually at least one thing you can do, even if it's just changing how you react.
- **Make a plan.** Set a goal and make a plan to get there. Try to do something each day to work toward your goal.

There is no magic formula for resilience, but each of the above steps can help you bounce back in some way. Find the mix that helps you feel strong and more able to adapt.

# Think Positive Thoughts

Life is full of challenges. And when you have trouble tackling one, it's easy to slip into negative thoughts about yourself. But letting those thoughts define you can take a real toll on your health. Take back control with positive affirmations.

An affirmation is a simple, positive statement that you repeat to yourself. An example is, "I am a smart and resourceful person." Statements like this can help you feel worthy and capable. They can also help change your thinking pattern.

Feeling good about yourself is key for optimal health. That's because high self-esteem is linked to optimism. And research shows optimistic people:

- Get sick less often
- Heal faster after illness
- Live longer lives

To help turn affirmations into beliefs, repeat them to yourself throughout the day. Here are some tips to lift your spirits:

- Jot down positive thoughts on sticky notes. Hang them on your fridge, calendar, or desk at work. These simple reminders will help cheer you on throughout the day.
- Use your own voice as a coach. Keep a small tape recorder with you. Use it to create an audio collection of positive thoughts. You can tune in whenever you get down on yourself.
- Remind yourself of past accomplishments. Write out a list of all the things you have achieved. Refer to this list each time you need a boost.
- Your thoughts can quickly turn into your worst enemy. Or they can become your best friends. Make more room for happy, healthy thoughts in your head.