



STRESS RELIEF TIPS

Use Regular Relaxation Periods for Work Breaks. Try 10 minute periods of (hopefully) undisturbed time away from phone and/or family. Breathe, stretch. Commit to using this for four to six weeks to begin to see the benefits. You will get more done in less time if you are not distracted by internalized stress.

Get Regular Exercise. Aerobic activities such as walking, jogging, swimming, biking, etc. for 20 minutes 3 times per week is minimum. Recommended is 30 minutes or more, 4-6 times per week.

Take a Yoga Class. Yoga classes are taught at gyms, Yoga studios and even workplaces. Find an entry level class and make a six-class commitment. By the end of the series, you'll know if Yoga is for you and you'll start to feel the benefits.

Avoid Caffeine. If you are stressed out, caffeine is like throwing gasoline on a fire to put it out! The secret is moderation and common-sense.

Get focused on New Directions. Giving yourself positive options if you feel trapped will help ease the tension. Plan for growth in all aspects of your life (family/relationships, spiritual interests, creativity, vacations, hobbies, etc).

Develop Positive Attitudes. See difficulties in a new light: as opportunities for growth and proving your abilities. When you feel a negative reaction coming on, breathe deeply, visualize a pleasant situation or ask yourself: Can I let this go? Am I willing to let this go? If so, when?

Protect Yourself From Negativity. Do not get caught up in other people's negative thinking or let them steal your peace of mind and positive energy. Consider the types of people, news and TV shows or movies you're exposing yourself to - do they support a healthy attitude?

Get Back In Control. Feeling "out of control" is a symptom of stress. You cannot control all the people and situations in your life so why not shift your thinking to controlling what you can -- your emotional reactions. When you feel out of control, admit it to yourself and then shift your attention to your breath. Breathe in a feeling you'd rather have until the stress subsides.

Give Sincere Compliments and Smile! Shine your light on everyone. You'll be amazed at the reactions and at how good you'll feel.

Find and use a confidant. Storing up negative feelings with no outlet is a huge stressor. If you don't have a friend or family member that will truly listen, find a counselor or spiritual teacher you can talk to. Do not bury your anger, fear or sadness.



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Get a Massage: Massage can be a great way to relieve tension in your body, and a self-massager gives you an inexpensive massage any time. When you're sitting at your desk you can take a two-minute stress break -- and give yourself a neck and shoulder massage.

Goof Off A Little. Let your inner child play now and then. Take a little time to do nothing or relive something you loved as a kid.

Take a Break from the News. You don't need to bury your head in the sand, but taking a break for a week (or even a day) from watching or reading about the news can give your system much-needed relief. News is stressful!

Give a hug. The more you give hugs, the more you'll get them and hugs are a wonderful antidote to a stressful day. While you're hugging, imagine you're breathing in affection and breathing out appreciation.

Cultivate Mindfulness. Worrying about the future or rehashing the past can really be a drain on you and up your stress levels. Practice the art of 'being in the now'. Appreciate the moment if you're enjoying it and know the moment has already passed if it was not what you wanted. Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh has a wonderful saying: "Breathing in, I calm body and mind. Breathing out, I smile. Dwelling in the present moment I know this is the only moment."

Volunteer. When you feel good about what you're doing to help others, the environment or animals, wonderful anti-aging hormones flow into your body and the negative effects of chronic stress are eliminated - at least for the time being. Choose a volunteer role that brings up positive, heartfelt emotions while you're doing the work. And remember to avoid over commitment or your volunteer work will add to your stress.

Spend time in nature. Take a walk on the beach. Go somewhere to watch a sunrise or sunset. Take a hike. Schedule an eco-vacation. Just getting out of the concrete jungle and energy of the city helps calm your nervous system. And when you gaze at something beautiful, you get the added bonus of generating positive emotions that soothe your system and give you added vitality.

Dance. Moving your body and having fun while you do it not only relieves muscular tension, it gives you added vitality and social connection. The combo is a great stress buster. And getting in shape is an added benefit. You don't have to take dance lessons. Try energetic Contra dancing for lots of fun or for a spiritual experience, check out Five Rhythms (or ecstatic) dancing in your area. Neither of these requires that you know how to dance.