**25 Tips To Get Rid of Stress**

**2005 words**

**Shhh, Quiet**.

We're surrounded by noise. The TV's always going. The radio gets turned on the moment we get in the car. The loud speakers blare as we grocery shop. It's a noisy world and that noise adds to stress levels. Enjoy the peacefulness of quiet. Intentionally spend 15 to 30 minutes in peaceful silence. You don't even have to do anything but listen to the silence if you don't want to.

Get a pair of noise blocking headphones if you can’t find a quiet place.

**Start Your Day on a Positive Note**

Don't get bogged down by last night's dishes, early morning laundry chores or racing around the house to get yourself ready for work. That's just starting your day loaded with stress. Start the day by reading from your favorite inspirational book. Have a cup of coffee on your back porch looking at the sun rise. Take a few moments and write in your journal. The world will wait and you will be ready for it. If you have to, get up 15 minutes earlier while everyone else is asleep to have your quiet time.

**Take Time for Yourself Every Day**

Do something you enjoy every day. It can be something as simple as taking a walk with your puppy pal, or playing your kitty cat. Value yourself by giving yourself a treat. If you love to garden but just haven't had the time. Make the time. Buy an assortment of herbs and pots and potter for a bit. Doing something you like is a great stress buster. It’s helpful to schedule that time for yourself rather than just catching it whenever you can.

**Only Worry When it Counts**

There are some things you can control and many you can't. Only worry about what you can control, otherwise it's time wasted. For example: If you're in charge of a family reunion picnic -- you can't control the weather. What you can control is the location. So make sure that there is a rained-out alternative just in case, then you won't have to worry about the weather. If your worries seem overwhelming, imagine taking each worry and hanging it on a “worry tree.” Another alternative is to write the worry on a piece of paper and then put it in a “worry jar.”

**What's Really the Problem?**

Often we overreact to situations because we're concerned about something else. Say, your boss comes in and asks you to fast track a project you've been working on and you become livid with outrage. Maybe you're not really angry with your boss, the project or the new deadline. It could be you're upset because your teenage son didn't come home till past midnight. If you can figure out what's really the problem you save yourself a lot of stress and concentrate on solving the problem, instead of creating new ones. When you feel that anger bubbling up, take a few deep breaths and ask yourself what’s really the problem.

**Live Each Day for That Day**

The past can't be repeated it can only be learned from. The future hasn't happened yet. Right now is the only time you have. Learn to let go of events in the past. Don't aggravate yourself by thinking what you might have done. Forgive yourself for your mistakes and remember what you've learned. Live in the moment while you plan for tomorrow. These days living in the moment is called mindfulness.

**Changing your diet** to include more fresh vegetables and fruits and less sugars, salt, and refined carbohydrates is helpful. Fast food is notorious for being loaded with salt – and fat for that matter. Instead of a burger for lunch, have a salad. Obviously decreasing your caffeine intake would help as well. Caffeine aggravates some of the symptoms of stress. Lemon balm tea is a good substitute for coffee as it has calming properties. Alcohol has a sedative effect but it wears off. Alcohol can cause depressing feelings, so be careful when you imbibe.

**Increasing the level of vitamin C**, an antioxidant, boosts the immune system and has been shown to decrease stress-related infections. Other antioxidants you might consider are Vitamin A and E. Citrus fruits are a source packed with Vitamin C. So are tomatoes. If you can't get enough vitamin C from fruits and vegetables, try a supplement. While Vitamin C is water soluble Vitamins E and A are not but are fat soluble. What does that mean for you? An excess amount of Vitamin C is washed out of your body through your urine. Excess Vitamins A and E stay stored in your fat so don’t overdo the amount you take.

**Aromatherapy is another alternative** to bring down stress levels. Aromatherapy relies on the use of essential oils. Essential oils are derived from plants, herbs, flowers, woods and citrus fruit peel. Lavender. Clary Sage, Rosemary, Sandalwood, and Tangerine are a few essential oils that have a calming soothing effect. Lavender is used in some baby bath products to help them drift calmly off to sleep. If it works for babies it should work for you.

**Add essential oils to a non-scented candle**. Light the candle and let it develop a pool of melted wax around the wick. Blow out the candle and add the essential oil to the melted wax and then relight. If you just add the oil to the melted wax while the candle is lit, the oil floats on top and is burnt off immediately.

**Add essential oils to a warm bath**, ¼ teaspoon to a teaspoon. The warm bath itself reduces stress by increasing blood circulation and relaxing muscles. Epsom salt and sea salt (1 to 2 cups) added to a bath tub in addition to the essential oils soothe sore muscles and adds a sense of buoyancy. Keep the bath warm but not hot.

**Sprinkle a few drops of calming essential oils** on a handkerchief. Enclose in a zipped locked bag and keep in your purse for those moments you're stressed out. Open the bag and gently sniff. Keep a baggie with lavender essential oil scented hankie in your nightstand or in the glove compartment of your car. The baggie keeps the oil from evaporating.

**Flowers are calming.** Fresh flowers bring the outdoor in. The scents and colors are soothing. Even photos or pictures of flowers have a soothing effect. Make it a point to buy a pot of blooming flowers every week. The grocery store often has reasonably priced flowers. Most florist and grocery store roses, while lovely, don’t have much of a scent. Lilies on the other hand are almost always highly scented. If you’re growing the flowers yourself, sweet peas, nicotania, and jasmine are all highly scented.

**Exercise is a time tested method** of reducing stress levels. Just make sure that the exercise is completed at least four hours before bed time. Exercising closer to bedtime might make it more difficult to fall asleep. If stress builds up at work, for example, take a 15 minute break and go for a walk or run up and down the stairs. Close your office door and do arm raises, squats, lunges or any other exercise you can do if office clothes.

**Grab a chunk of chocolate**. It's true chocolate makes you happy and that relieves stress. Chocolate also has health benefits. Don't go overboard, one square of dark chocolate is all you need. The darker the chocolate the better. Combine the chocolate with warm milk for a soothing beverage. Choose a dark chocolate bar with almonds for even more stress relief.

**Got a pet?** Stroking your dog or cat or even your pet rabbit lowers not only stress levels but your blood pressure as well. Use long firm but gentle strokes. Focus on your pet not your worries. Your pet will appreciate the extra attention. And while you’re at it, play with your pet for a few minutes or take it for a walk.

**Get enough sleep**. Yes, it's easier said than done when you have a hectic lifestyle. Sleep deprivation leads to stress. So make sure you get your 8 hours of beauty sleep. Have a bedtime routine. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even the weekends. If you're a nap person, squeeze in a 20 minute during the day. Don't sleep any longer or you'll end up groggy instead of refreshed. Don’t try to make up for lost sleep the next day.

**Get some sunshine**. Sunlight relieves stress and builds up your vitamin D. Being outside is soothing. If you live near a wood, grassy park or public garden, take your splash of sunshine in that area. The green growing plants are another method of reducing stress. Getting back to nature is calming. Combine nature with a few yoga postures for triple the benefit.

**Eat protein with every meal**. Protein boosts your energy levels and that can decrease stress. Sources include nuts, dairy products, beans, and lean meats. A portion is about 3 ounces or the size of a deck of cards. Pack a few high protein snacks in your purse, briefcase or your desk drawer. Tuna salad now comes in individual serving size pouches, requiring no refrigeration. When you’re hungry have one of your high protein snacks instead of hitting the vending machines.

**Massage, especially of the neck and shoulders** reduces stress, and helps alleviate the headaches that some people experience with stress. Self-massage performed on the temples, and back of the neck, relieves stress. Invest in self massage equipment so you can easily reach your back muscles. Don’t be put off by how some of that equipment looks. Look at online videos to get more ideas for self massage.

**Yoga and Pilates (an exercise discipline)** include stretching movements which releases tension within the muscles and aids in blood flow, thereby reducing stress. This type of gentle exercise is great in the morning as it starts your day off. Stretch your legs, arms, torso and neck. Then shower all that relieved stress away. Most yoga studios offer reasonably priced classes so you can learn the basics and then practice at home. Select a few yoga postures that you can do fully clothed. Take a yoga break at work to relieve tension. If the position is uncomfortable that’s okay, if it hurts that’s not okay. Adjust your position so you’re not in pain.

**Meditation is well known** for its ability to decrease stress. You don't have to sit in a contorted position. Find a quiet space and sit comfortably. Close your eyes and focus on a pleasant memory or place you've been. When other thoughts intrude just let them float away and come back to your pleasant memory. Invest in ear phones and meditation CDs. White noise Cds may help block outside noise and focus you on your mediation. Combine meditation with aromatherapy and gentle stretches after the session is completed.

**Boost your level of oxytocin**. The feel good hormone is released when you treat yourself to a half cup of nuts. Use dry roasted unsalted nuts to cut down on fats and sodium. Add nuts, such as almonds to a cup of nonfat yogurt. Eggs, bananas and sweet peppers all increase the body’s level of oxytocin, although you probably wouldn’t want to combine them all in the same dish.

**Kill off cortisol.** That hormone not only produces stress but leads to weight gain. Eating seafood twice a week helps reduce your body's production of cortisol. Melatonin, B complex vitamins, and Vitamin C lower cortisol levels. There are supplements you can take to lower cortisol. Exercise does as well.

**Laughter in this case is the best medicine.** Look at cute pictures. Scroll through online video sites for humorous, but not nasty funny, videos. Listen to your favorite comedian. Share a joke with friends. Rent a funny movie. Smile even if you don’t feel like smiling. It’s contagious. As people smile back at you, your smile becomes genuine.