

32 Stress-reduction Tips

By the time your day is over, you likely will have completed many tasks: completing household chores, working on homework, spending time with friends, working at a part-time job, etc. All of these responsibilities may cause stress, leaving you physically exhausted with tense muscles and an aching head. However, there are small things you can incorporate into each day to make your life easier and alleviate stress.

Reducing Stress

Try these stress reducers to prevent stress, or try them when you feel tense:

1. Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning. The inevitable morning mishaps will be less stressful.
2. Get enough sleep. If necessary, use an alarm clock to remind you to go to bed.
3. Schedule a realistic day. Avoid the tendency to schedule back-to-back appointments; allow time between appointments for a breathing spell.
4. Eliminate or restrict the amount of caffeine in your diet.
5. Do not rely on your memory. Write down appointment times, assignment due dates, etc. As an old Chinese proverb states, "The palest ink is better than the most retentive memory."
6. Be prepared to wait. A paperback, crossword puzzle or cell phone game can make a wait in a post-office line almost pleasant.
7. Procrastination is stressful. Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do today; whatever you want to do today, do it now.
8. Relax your standards. The world will not end if the grass does not get mowed this weekend or if the sheets have to be changed on Sunday instead of Saturday.
9. Learn to say no. Saying no to extra projects, social events and activities you do not have the time or energy for takes practice.
10. Eliminate destructive self-talk. "I can't ..." or "I'm too inexperienced to ..." are negative thoughts that can increase stress levels.
11. Turn needs into preferences. Our basic physical needs translate into food, water and keeping warm. Everything else is a preference. Do not get attached to preferences.
12. If an especially unpleasant task faces you, do it early in the day. Get it over with, and the rest of the day will be free of anxiety.
13. Have a forgiving view of events and people. Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world.
14. Do something that you enjoy every day.
15. Have an optimistic view of the world. Believe that most people are doing the best they can.
16. Take time for yourself. Develop a belief that everyone needs quiet time every day to relax and be alone.
17. Become more flexible. Some things are worth not doing perfectly, and some issues are good for compromising.
18. Talk it out. Discussing your problems with a trusted friend or a responsible adult can help clear your mind of confusion so you can concentrate on problem-solving.
19. Use your weekend time off for a change of pace. If your work is slow and patterned, make sure to build action and time for spontaneity into your weekends. If your workweek is fast-paced and full of appointments and deadlines, seek peace and solitude during your days off.
20. Writing your thoughts and feelings down (in a journal or on a paper to be thrown away) can help you clarify things and provide you with a renewed perspective.
21. Do something nice for somebody else.

22. Try the following yoga technique whenever you feel the need to relax: inhale deeply through your nose to the count of eight. Then, with lips puckered, exhale very slowly through your mouth to the count of 16 or for as long as you can. Concentrate on the long sighing sound, and feel the tension dissolve. Repeat 10 times.
23. Turn off your phone. Want to take a long bath, meditate, sleep or read without interruption? Drum up the courage to temporarily disconnect.
24. Shrug your shoulders, roll your neck. Anyone who has ever had a tension headache knows just how knotted up the muscles in the back of the neck can get. Stretching this vulnerable area can help ease tension.
25. Get up and take a break from your work area. A change of scenery can rejuvenate you and help to spur on creativity.
26. Do not take yourself too seriously, or no one else will.
27. Do not let negative people get you down. Keep a positive attitude.
28. Live each day one at a time. "Worry about the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves." This is another way of saying take care of today as best as you can, and the yesterdays and tomorrows will take care of themselves.
29. Change in yourself what you do not like in others.
30. Do one thing at a time. When you are with someone, concentrate fully on that person. When you are busy with homework, concentrate on doing that assignment, and forget about everything else that you have to do.
31. Focus on understanding rather than on being understood, on loving rather than on being loved.
32. Protect yourself against a feared event. Just as a vaccine containing a virus can protect you from an illness, if you expose yourself to one or more of the dreaded aspects of an experience beforehand, you often can lessen your fears.

Resources

- National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov
- National Institutes of Health: <http://health.nih.gov>
- Mental Health America: www.nmha.org

Here when you need us.

Call: 877-314-5841

Online: guidanceresources.com

App: GuidanceNowSM

Web ID: TARHEELS

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