

Ten Stress Management Strategies

1. Organize Yourself. Take better control of the way you're spending your time and energy so you can handle stress more effectively.
2. Control Your Environment. Take better control of who and what is surrounding you. In this way, you can either get rid of stress or get support for yourself.
3. Love Yourself. Give yourself positive feedback. Remember, you are a unique individual who is doing the best you can.
4. Reward Yourself. Plan leisure activities into your life. It really helps to have something to look forward to.
5. Exercise Your Body. Your health and productivity depend upon your body's ability to bring oxygen and food to its cells. Therefore, exercise your heart and lungs regularly, a minimum of three days per week for 15-30 minutes. This includes such activities as walking, jogging, cycling, swimming, aerobics, etc.
6. Relax Yourself. Find activities to help take your mind off your stress and concentrate on breathing and positive thoughts. Dreaming counts along with meditation, progressive relaxation, exercise, listening to relaxing music, communicating with friends and loved ones, etc.
7. Rest Yourself. As regularly as possible stop, take a moment, breath, look outside, smell the air, notice something beautiful and nourishing, etc. Sleep 7-8 hours a night. Take study breaks. There is only so much your mind can absorb at one time. It needs time to process and integrate information. A general rule of thumb: take a ten-minute break every hour. Rest your eyes as well as your mind.
8. Be Aware of Yourself. Be aware of distress signals such as insomnia, headaches, anxiety, upset stomach, lack of concentration, colds/flu, excessive tiredness, etc. Remember, these can be signs of potentially more serious disorders (i.e., ulcers, hypertension, heart disease).
9. Feed Yourself / Do Not Poison Your Body. Eat a balanced diet. Avoid high calorie foods that are high in fats and sugar. Don't depend on drugs and/or alcohol. Caffeine will keep you awake, but it also makes it harder for some to concentrate. Remember, a twenty-minute walk has been proven to be a better tranquilizer than some prescription drugs.
10. Enjoy Yourself. It has been shown that happier people tend to live longer, have less physical problems, and are more productive. Look for the humor in life when things don't make sense. Remember, you are very special and deserve only the best treatment from yourself.

52 Proven Tips for Stress Relief

- 1 **Get up fifteen minutes earlier in the morning.** The inevitable morning mishaps will be less stressful.
- 2 **Prepare for the morning the evening before.** Set the breakfast table, make lunches, put out the clothes you plan to wear, etc.
- 3 **Don't rely on your memory.** Write down appointment times, when to pick up the laundry, when library books are due, etc.
- 4 **Do nothing that, after being done, leads you to tell a lie.**
- 5 **Make duplicates of all keys.** Bury a house key in a secret spot in the garden and carry a duplicate car key in your wallet, apart from your key ring.
- 6 **Practice preventive maintenance.** Your car, appliances, home, and relationships will be less likely to break down/fall apart "at the worst possible moment."
- 7 **Be prepared to wait.** A paperback can make a wait in a post office line almost pleasant.
- 8 **Procrastination is stressful.** Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do today; whatever you want to do today, do it now.
- 9 **Plan ahead.** Don't let the gas tank get below one-quarter full; keep a well-stocked "emergency shelf" of home staples; don't wait until you're down to your last bus token or postage stamp to buy more; etc.
- 10 **Don't put up with something that doesn't work right.** If your alarm clock, wallet, shoelaces, windshield wipers - whatever- are a constant aggravation, get them fixed or get new ones.
- 11 **Allow 15 minutes of extra time to get to appointments.** Plan to arrive at an airport one hour before domestic departures.
- 12 **Eliminate (or restrict) the amount of caffeine in your diet.**
- 13 **Always set up contingency plans, "just in case."** ("If for some reason either of us is delayed, here's what we'll do. . ." kind of thing. Or, "If we get split up in the shopping center, here's where we'll meet.")
- 14 **Relax your standards.** The world will not end if the grass doesn't get mowed this weekend.
- 15 **Pollyanna-Power!** For every one thing that goes wrong, there are probably 10 or 50 or 100 blessings. Count 'em!
- 16 **Ask questions.** Taking a few moments to repeat back directions, what someone expects of you, etc., can save hours. (The old "the more hurried I go, the behinder I get," idea.)

- 17 **Say "No!"** Saying "no" to extra projects, social activities, and invitations you know you don't have the time or energy for takes practice, self-respect, and a belief that everyone, everyday, needs quiet time to relax and be alone.
- 18 **Unplug your phone.** Want to take a long bath, meditate, sleep, or read without interruption? Drum up the courage to temporarily disconnect. (The possibility of there being a terrible emergency in the next hour or so is almost nil.) Or use an answering machine.
- 19 **Turn "needs" into preferences.** Our basic physical needs translate into food, water, and keeping warm. Everything else is a preference. Don't get attached to preferences.
- 20 **Simplify, simplify, simplify. . .**
- 21 **Make friends with non-worriers.** Nothing can get you into the habit of worrying faster than associating with chronic worrywarts.
- 22 **Get up and stretch** periodically if your job requires that you sit for extended periods.
- 23 **Wear earplugs.** If you need to find quiet at home, pop in some earplugs.
- 24 **Get enough sleep.** If necessary, use an alarm clock to remind you to go to bed.
- 25 **Create order out of chaos.** Organize your home and workspace so that you always know exactly where things are. Put things away where they belong and you won't have to go through the stress of losing things.
- 26 **Relax all your muscles and take several deep, slow breath.** When feeling stressed, most people tend to breathe short, shallow breaths. When you breathe like this, stale air is not expelled, oxidation of the tissues is incomplete, and muscle tension frequently results. Check your breathing throughout the day, and before, during, and after high-pressure situations. If you find your stomach muscles knotted and your breathing is shallow, so relax all your muscles and take several deep, slow breaths.
- 27 **Writing your thoughts and feelings down** (in a journal, or on paper to be thrown away) can help you clarify things and can give you a renewed perspective
- 28 **Yoga techniques.** 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.
- 29 **Inoculate yourself against a feared event.** Example: before speaking in public, take time to go over every part of the experience in your mind. Imagine what you'll wear, what the audience will look like, how you will present your talk, what the questions will be and how you will answer them, etc. Visualize the experience the way you would have it be. You'll likely find that when the time comes to make the actual presentation, it will be "old hat" and much of your anxiety will have fled.

- 30 **Diversion.** When the stress of having to get a job done gets in the way of getting the job done, diversion - a voluntary change in activity and/or environment - may be just what you need.
- 31 **Talk it out.** Discussing your problems with a trusted friend, partner, or mentor can help clear your mind of confusion so you can concentrate on problem solving.
- 32 **Avoid unnecessary stress.** One of the most obvious ways to avoid unnecessary stress is to select an environment (work, home, leisure), which is in line with your personal needs and desires. If you hate desk jobs, don't accept a job that requires that you sit at a desk all day. If you hate to talk politics, don't associate with people who love to talk politics, etc.
- 33 **Learn to live one day at a time.** Twelve step programs are great places to learn this.
- 34 **Every day, do something you really enjoy.**
- 35 **Add an ounce of love to everything you do.**
- 36 **Take a hot bath or shower** (or a cool one in summertime) to relieve tension.
- 37 **Do something for somebody else.**
- 38 **Focus on understanding rather than on being understood; on loving rather than on being loved.**
- 39 **Looking better can help you feel better.** Do something that will improve your appearance.
- 40 **Schedule a realistic day.** Avoid the tendency to schedule back-to-back appointments; allow time between appointments for a breathing spell.
- 41 **Become more flexible.** Some things are worth not doing perfectly and some issues are fine to compromise upon.
- 42 **Eliminate destructive self-talk:** "I'm too old to. . .," "I'm too fat to. . .," etc.
- 43 **Use your weekend time for a change of pace.** If your work week is slow and patterned, make sure there is action and time for spontaneity built into your weekends. If your work week is fast-paced and full of people and deadlines, seek peace and solitude during your days off. Feel as if you aren't accomplishing anything at work? Tackle a job on the weekend, which you can finish to your satisfaction.
- 44 **Take care of the todays as best you can and the yesterdays and the tomorrows will take care of themselves.** "Worry about the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves." That's another way of saying/doing take care of the todays as best you can and the yesterdays and the tomorrows will take care of themselves.

- 45 ***Do one thing at a time.*** When you are with someone, be with that person and with no one or nothing else. When you are busy with a project, concentrate on doing that project and forget about everything else you have to do.
- 46 ***Allow yourself time - everyday - for privacy, quiet, and introspection.***
- 47 ***Do it early in the day.*** If an especially unpleasant task faces you, do it early in the day and get it over with, then the rest of your day will be free of anxiety.
- 48 ***Learn to delegate responsibility to capable others.***
- 49 ***Don't forget to take a lunch break.*** Try to get away from your desk or work area in body and mind, even if it's just for 15 or 20 minutes.
- 50 ***Forget about counting to 10.*** Count to 1,000 before doing something or saying anything that could make matters worse.
- 51 ***Have a forgiving view of events and people.*** Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world.
- 52 ***Have an optimistic view of the world.*** Believe that most people are doing the best they can