

## IDEAS TO RELIEVE STRESS

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 (make lunches, decide on clothes to wear, etc.)
3. Don't rely on your memory. Write down appointments, follow up items, etc. (note: several time management systems have great ways to follow up on things that need doing.)
4. When in doubt do nothing. Time often takes care of the problem.
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.
6. Practice preventive maintenance on your car, appliances, home and social relationships.
7. Be prepared to wait. A paperback can make a wait in the post office line almost pleasant.
8. Procrastination is stressful. Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do today; what you want to do today, do it now.
9. Plan ahead. Keep the gas tank above the 1/4 level, have a well-stocked emergency shelf of home staples; don't wait until you're out of stamps or bus tokens to buy more.
10. Don't put up with something that doesn't work right. If your alarm, wallet, shoe lace, windshield wiper - whatever is a constant aggravation, get it fixed or get a new one.
11. Allow 15 minutes of extra time to get to appointments. Arrive at the airport an hour before your flight.
12. Eliminate (or restrict) the amount of caffeine in your diet.
13. Set up contingency plans, just in case. "If we get split up in the shopping center, here's where we'll meet", and set a time.
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 10-50 blessings. Count them.
16. Ask questions. Taking a few minutes to clarify instructions can save hours.
17. Say "No!" Saying no to extra projects, social activities, and invitations you know you don't have time or energy for takes practice, self-respect, and belief that everyone, every day needs quiet time to relax and to 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.
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 nonworriers. Their attitudes can affect you positively.
22. Get up and stretch periodically, if your job requires you to sit.
23. Wear earplugs when you need quiet amid all the noise of life.
24. Get enough sleep.
25. Create order. Organize your home and work space so you know where things are.
26. Breathe deeply and slowly whenever you feel pressure. If your stomach feels tight, relax and take several deep breaths.
27. Write your thoughts and feelings to help clarify your thoughts and give your ideas perspective.

28. Use yoga techniques to relax. Inhale deeply through your nose to the count of eight, then, exhale slowly through puckered lips to the count of sixteen. Do 10 times.

29. Inoculate yourself against a feared event. Go over every part of the experience in your mind before it occurs and when the event takes place, you will feel much less anxious.

30. Do something else for a few minutes (for a diversion) if you get stuck on a project.

31. Discuss problems with a trusted friend to help clear your mind.

32. Select an environment at work, home and leisure that is in line with your personal needs and desires. If you hate desk jobs, don't accept a job that requires you to sit at a desk all day.

33. Learn to view one day at a time.

34. Do something every day that you really enjoy.

35. Add an ounce of love to everything you do.

36. Take a hot bath or cool shower to relieve tension.

37. Do something for somebody else.

38. Focus on understanding rather than on being understood, on loving rather than being loved.

39. Do something that will improve your appearance. Looking better can help you feel better.

40. Make your schedule realistic in terms of what you can really do.

41. Become more flexible. Not all things need to be done perfectly.

42. Eliminate destructive self-talk (I'm too old or too fat, etc.).

43. Use the weekend for a change of pace.

44. Take care of today the best you can and yesterday and tomorrow will take care of themselves.

45. Do only one thing at a time.

46. Allow yourself time every day for privacy, quiet, and introspection.

47. Do unpleasant tasks early in the day.

48. Learn to delegate responsibility.

49. Don't forget to take a lunch break. Try to get away from your desk, even if only for 15-20 minutes.

50. Count to 10 or even 1000 to avoid saying or doing something that you would regret later.

51. Have a forgiving view of events and people.

52. Keep your body healthy by eating properly and getting plenty of rest and exercise.

#### **PHYSICAL REACTIONS TO STRESS**

Illness may be the body's response to stress. Here are some of the areas where stress-related problems can show up.

weight gain or loss  
insomnia  
chronic fatigue  
blood-pressure problems  
stomach cramps  
impotence (men)  
menstrual irregularity (women)  
irritated-bowel syndrome  
muscle spasms  
headaches and migraines  
cold sores  
heart attack  
ulcers  
hives