

Tips for Reducing Stress

1. Practice being quiet & still: A few moments or a period of quiet is important in each day. Find time to be with yourself and your feelings!
2. Relax, breathe deeply and allow the quiet to become part of you.
3. Learn to plan: Disorganization breeds stress. Having too many simultaneous projects often leads to confusion, forgetfulness and the feeling that uncompleted projects are hanging over your head. Don't do TOO MUCH!
4. Recognize and accept your limits: Most of us set unreasonable and perfectionistic goals. We can never be perfect, so we often have a sense of failure or inadequacy no matter how well we perform. Set achievable goals!
5. Learn to play: Plan to escape from the pressures of life and have fun. Find pastimes, which are absorbing and enjoyable to you no matter what your level of ability is.
6. Be a mostly positive person: Avoid criticizing others, it brings "negative energy". Learn to praise the things you like in others. Focusing upon the good in others will allow you to do the same for yourself.
7. Learn to tolerate and to forgive: Intolerance of others leads to frustration and anger. Attempting to really understand the way other people feel can make you more accepting of them.
8. Avoid unnecessary competition: There are many competitive situations in life that we can't avoid. Too much concern with winning in too many areas of life can create excessive tension and anxiety, and make you overly aggressive.
9. Get regular physical exercise: You will be more likely to stay with an exercise program if you choose one that you really enjoy rather than one that feels like pure hard work and drudgery. A few times weekly is better than nothing!
10. Learn a systematic, drug-free method of relaxing. Meditation, yoga or progressive relaxation can be learned from various accredited teachers.
11. Talk out your troubles: Find a friend, member of the clergy, counselor, or psychotherapist you can be open with. Expressing your "bottled up" tension to a sympathetic ear can be incredibly helpful. "Chatrooms" can also help.
12. Change your thinking and change your life! How we *feel* often depends on how we think or our philosophy of life. Changing beliefs is a challenging but doable process. There is little practical wisdom in the modern world to guide us through our lives. No one has all the answers, but some answers are available. Reading positive thinking materials or working with a counselor can help begin the change in your life.

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