

Things You Can Do To Relieve Stress

1. Take time for you!

Ask yourself, "Am I giving too much to others and not enough for myself? Do I need to take time to care for myself?" If the answer is "yes," then refuse to feel guilty about it and just do it!

If you feel guilty when you relax and do something you enjoy, chances are you will stop doing it. Ultimately, you lose. You may be living your life through other people's standards and expectations. Take control of your guilt-producing thoughts and tell yourself "It is okay and good for you to take time for myself." Focus on the benefits to you and your family when you are a more relaxed and energized person.

2. Go to lunch and don't rush

Take a long lunch break several times a week. Don't do business. Be a friend to someone. Volunteer your time to a good cause. Read a novel over a cup of tea. Go to a museum. Sit quietly by a stream. Eat slowly. Try a new restaurant or a new recipe at home. Go out with a good friend and agree not to discuss problems or business.

3. Walk every day

Walk by yourself or with a friend. Talk — not about problems, but possibilities. Stop along the way and smell the flowers.

4. Exercise more

Join an aerobics class, go to the gym, play tennis, ride a bike, hike on weekends, go to a fitness resort, or jog with friends. Exercise does more to reduce stress hormones and chemicals in our body than any other activity. You will feel better.

5. Learn deep relaxation skills

Take a class in yoga, imagery training, progressive relaxation, meditation or autogenics. All of these will teach you how to relax your mind, body and emotions by focusing your attention on more peaceful thoughts.

6. Listen to relaxation tapes

Audiotapes are an excellent way to learn how to let go and relax. Develop the skill of deep relaxation. It will cleanse your body of damaging stress hormones and chemicals.

7. Listen to relaxing music

Whatever form of music you like can be appropriate to letting go and relaxing. New Age music and classical music are particularly helpful for reducing stress.

More signs of stress ...

Anger

Perfectionism

Time-urgency

Disappointment

Negative mood

Underachievement

Physical problems