

10 Tips to Help You De-Stress

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These days it seems everyone is living and breathing stress. Trying to undo the tension can just add more stress if you take the wrong approach. But there's no need to do that; there are many healthy, proven ways to get stress relief.

Stress Relief: 10 Tips to Help You De-Stress

Here are some tried and true tips to get stress relief:

1. **Exercise.** “Run, do some yoga, punch a bag at the gym,” advises Charles Goodstein, MD, clinical professor of psychiatry at New York University School of Medicine in New York City and president of the Psychoanalytic Association of New York. Exercise is a way to manage stress that doesn't have to add to your financial woes. For example, a 20-minute walk or jog around your block can yield up to 12 hours of improved mood. The main thing is to find a physical activity that you enjoy, whether it's dancing or fly fishing.
2. **Socialize.** Spending time with [friends](#) and family who give you a sense of belonging, purpose, and fun may provide all the stress relief you need.
3. **Write.** Dedicating a period of time every day to write about a situation that is bothering you may reduce tension and give you stress relief for the rest of the day. [Keeping a journal](#) can also help you solve problems or find positive angles amongst the stressors.
4. **Laugh.** Laughter really is the best medicine. It is proven to lower tension, and at the same time, improves blood flow and the health of your heart. Rent a funny movie or hang out with that wannabe-comedian pal, and forget about your worries for a while.
5. **Take care of yourself.** When tension spikes, it can be tempting to put yourself last — but prioritizing healthy eating, physical activity, relationships, and sleep is necessary if you want to avoid making your stress worse.
6. **Get some fresh air.** If you are cooped up inside all day, take a few minutes to get outside and see the sun. A little time in the great outdoors can improve your mood and help you relax.
7. **Be kind to yourself.** Think about positive [affirmations](#) daily. Thinking negative thoughts only makes you feel bad and will increase stress. Tell yourself you are doing a good job, and believe it!
8. **Meditate.** Practice deep breathing and meditation exercises daily, and when you feel tension rising.
9. **Be thankful.** Showing thanks for your family, friends, and loved ones and being thankful for the positive aspects of your life has a calming affect. Not only does it give you perspective, it makes other people feel good, too.
10. **Make a change.** Sometimes the best way to obtain stress relief is to remove your source of tension. “For example, if you are in a job working at a certain pace in an environment that is objectively painful because of your boss, coworkers, and so on, and you're doing it because you can earn 10 percent more money than doing something else, you could calculate that you might be better off doing something else,” says Dr. Goodstein.

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Stress Relief: Unwise Choices

Many people turn to unhealthy choices in an attempt to cope with tension, says Goodstein. These include:

- Substance abuse
- Smoking
- Overeating
- Drinking alcohol to excess
- Gambling

Even a seemingly harmless source of stress relief, such as computer games, can add to your problems if it cuts into the time you need to take care of yourself. Chances are that if you play computer games more than seven hours a week, you could be losing two hours of sleep a night — which will actually add to your tension in the long run. If you notice that you are starting to depend on unhealthy sources of stress relief and you can't make a change on your own, seek help.

Stress Relief: When Tension Signals a Deeper Problem

Goodstein says he would prefer that people use proven tension-taming steps to gain stress relief instead of taking a medication, but there are times when people need more help. "Some stressors are chronic and unremitting," he says. "You may want to take a broad overview of your life to see if you have allowed yourself to be encumbered by factors that are making your life unpleasant." If so, consider making a lifestyle change, he says.

If you've been hiking, socializing, and taking care of yourself and you still have high levels of stress, talk to your doctor. Your tension could be a sign of another health issue.

Remember, you don't have to live with tension. In fact, not only is tension unpleasant, but it is unhealthy. Keep trying out stress-relief techniques until you find the ones that work for you.

Source: <http://www.everydayhealth.com/emotional-health/strategies-for-de-stressing.aspx>