

35 Proven Stress Reducers

1. When feeling stressed, most people tend to breathe in short, shallow breaths. When you breathe like this, stale air is not expelled, oxidation of tissues is inadequate and muscle tension frequently results. Check your breathing throughout the day. If you find your stomach muscles are knotted and your breathing is shallow, relax and take several deep breaths.
2. Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning. The inevitable morning mishaps will be less stressful.
3. Don't rely on your memory. Write down appointment times, when to pick up dry cleaning, etc.
4. Practice preventive maintenance. Your car, appliances, home or relationships will be less likely to break down or fall apart "at the worst possible moment."
5. Eliminate (or restrict) the amount of caffeine in your diet.
6. Procrastination is stressful. Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do today; whatever you want to do today, do it now.
7. Plan ahead. Don't let the gas tank get too low, don't wait until you're down to your last postage stamp to buy more, etc.
8. Don't put up with something that doesn't work right. If your alarm clock, wallet, windshield wiper-whatever-are a constant aggravation, get them fixed or get new ones.
9. Allow 15 minutes of extra time to get to an appointment. Plan to arrive at the airport two hours before domestic departures and three hours before international departures.
10. Be prepared to wait. A paperback book can make waiting in line almost enjoyable.
11. Always set up contingency plans, "just in case." For example, "If either of us is delayed, here's what we'll do...."
12. At times, relax your standards. The world will not end if the grass doesn't get mowed this weekend, if the laundry is cleaned on Sunday instead of Saturday, etc.
13. For every one thing that goes wrong, there are probably 10 to 50 to 100 blessings. Count them.
14. Ask questions. Taking a few minutes to repeat back directions, what someone expects of you, etc., can save hours.
15. 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 every one, every day needs quiet time to relax and to be alone.
16. Unplug your phone. Want to take a long bath, 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.)
17. Simplify, simplify, simplify.
18. Make friends with non-worriers. Nothing gets you into the habit of worry faster than association with chronic worrywarts.
19. Get enough sleep.
20. Create order out of choice. 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.
21. Learn to live one day at a time.
22. Every day, do something you really enjoy.
23. Talk it out. Discussing your problems with a trusted friend can help you clear your mind of confusion so you can concentrate on problem solving.
24. Do something for someone else.
25. Do something that will improve your appearance. Looking better can help you feel better.
26. Schedule a realistic day. Avoid the tendency to schedule back-to-back appointments.
27. Become more flexible. Some things are worth not doing perfectly and some issues are easy to compromise upon.
28. Eliminate destructive self-talk: "I'm too old to" "I'm too fat to..." etc.
29. Learn to delegate responsibility to capable others.
30. If an especially "unpleasant" task faces you, do it early in the day and get it over with. The rest of the day will be free of anxiety.
31. Take care of today as best you can and the yesterdays and tomorrows will take care of themselves.
32. Allow yourself time-everyday-for privacy, quiet and introspection.
33. Do one thing at a time. When you are with someone, be with that person and no one else or nothing else.
34. Have a forgiving view of events and people. Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world.
35. Have an optimistic view of the world. Believe that most people are doing the best they can.

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