

Stress Less: 28 Practical Stress Management Tips

1. Get adequate rest. Adequate sleep is essential for physical and mental health. When working on long projects or with heavy concentration take short breaks every hour or two.
2. Slow down. When you notice yourself rushing and getting tense, try to slow down deliberately.
3. Use deep and slow breathing. One easy way to release tension is to take a few minutes to breathe deeply and slowly down into your belly. Imagine yourself breathing into the tense parts of your body.
4. Learn methods for relaxation, such as buying a relaxation tape, using meditation, yoga, deep breathing, progressive relaxation etc. It takes time to learn to relax. You cannot force yourself to relax; you need to allow it to happen. Use creative visualization techniques.
5. Acknowledge that your current lifestyle may be unhealthy and you need to make changes. The choice to change is YOURS.
6. Take responsibility for your own life. Learn to recognize and honor your needs and wants. Recognize your personal rights. You have the right to say no, you have the right to express your feelings or your opinion, and you have the right to ask to have your needs met. Be assertive in expressing your thoughts, feelings, needs and opinions.
7. Set small goals that you can accomplish easily, and congratulate yourself for every success.
8. Focus on the present and positive aspects of your life. Let go of regretting the past and worrying about the future. It is easier to problem solve when staying in the here-and-now.
9. Become aware of your negative and stressful self-talk (i.e. I can't do that because I'm..., I always make mistakes). Challenge and dispute that talk (i.e. I am successful at....., my..... does not determine my worth). Replace the negative statements with positive statements and encouragement (i.e. I have value, It is ok to make mistakes, I learn from my mistakes). Be aware of all the unspoken rules in your life and revise them. Replace stressful thoughts with calming self-talk.
10. Learn to identify and express your feelings in appropriate ways.

11. Stop comparing yourself to others. Value your individuality.
12. Take time to nurture and be kind to yourself. Go for a walk, a movie, take a hot bath, buy yourself a special present.
13. Enjoy being in your body, do activities you like, such as dancing, massage, yoga, swimming, biking. Stand up and stretch when working on long projects.
14. Seek out social support. Talk to someone when you feel stressed. Brainstorming with another person can often help identify solutions to a problem that may not have been apparent to you.
15. Keep a journal of your experiences, feelings, thoughts and insights. This is a safe place to be honest with yourself - the journal is for your eyes only, no one else will be reading it or judging it. The journal can also help you identify your stressors so you may prepare yourself to develop coping strategies or ways to eliminate these stressors from your life.
16. Develop a creative outlet. Take up painting, drawing, writing, dancing, and singing. No one will judge it and it is a great outlet for expressing feelings.
17. Watch your physical health - healthy eating, moderate exercise, adequate sleep, drink a lot of water.
18. Change your environment. Go on a holiday, away for the weekend, go for a walk, spend a few minutes in a place you find pleasurable and relaxing.
19. Take time to play! Take time to simply have fun. Laugh!
20. Learn to tolerate uncertainty and unpredictability. There are certain things in life that we just can't control. Things that happen suddenly and unexpectedly are more stressful than events that we anticipate. Learning to anticipate that change occurs reduces the probability of being caught by surprise. We increase our stress if we assume that the future will be just like the past.
21. Remember how you dealt with similar problems in the past. What worked and what didn't work? Ask yourself: why am I not coping now?
22. Learn skills and competencies that will help you deal with situations in your life. Learn problem-solving and goal-setting skills.

23. Prepare yourself for future stressful events by rehearsing what you will say or do. How will you deal with what may happen? What is the worse case scenario and can you handle it?
24. Learn to resolve conflicts. Realize that it is okay to agree to disagree, one person does not have to be right. There is more than one perspective in any situation.
25. Become aware of how you deal with stress. What are the physical, emotional and behavioral symptoms that you develop when under stress? Use these as a “red light” or signal that you are becoming stressed.
26. Learn effective communication skills and assertiveness.
27. Reduce the demands in your life by establishing priorities, eliminating some activities, simplifying other activities and refusing unreasonable demands. Learn time-management skills. Establish routines.
28. Develop a daily routine to relax, slow down and let go, which we can engage in daily.