

## STRESS BUSTERS! 14 TECHNIQUES THAT WORK

If you feel there is a high level of stress in your life there is a lot you can do about it. Here are 14 simple techniques to help reduce stress and its impact.

1. Take a break: A change of pace, no matter how short, can give you a new outlook on old problems.

2. Take one thing at a time: When work seems endless, tension and anxiety really build up. Planning can help you reduce stress as you use your time and energy more efficiently.

3. Take a power nap: Stretch out on a couch, bed or your office floor, close your eyes and rest, relax, or even sleep for 15 minutes (set a timer or alarm if you need to). Many successful people have found this to be a helpful way to recharge.

4. Shun the "Superman" urge: Be realistic. People who expect too much of themselves can become tense if their plans don't work out. Set practical goals.

5. Go easy with your criticism: Too much criticism of others and of yourself can lead to frustration. Instead of criticizing, search for good points.

6. Talk about it: When tensions build up, try discussing the problem with a close friend or with the people involved.

7. Learn to relax: Everyone needs and deserves some relaxation. Just a few minutes of peace and quiet each day makes a big difference!

8. Avoid changes: Many changes at once can result in increased stress. When you can, plan to avoid too many big changes at the same time.

9. Give in occasionally: It's not always urgent to be right. If you yield, others probably will, too. Working out disagreements with others will help you reduce and even avoid stressful situations.

10. Give the other fellow a break: Competition is contagious, but so is cooperation. Giving the other fellow a break can make things easier for you, too.

11. Accept what you cannot change: When a problem is beyond your control, learn to recognize and accept it. It beats spinning your wheels and getting nowhere.

12. Exercise regularly: Any sport will help you relax and let off steam. How about swimming, tennis, bicycling, jogging, or walking? You can reduce stress while having fun!

13. Go fly a kite! Take time to play. Too often it is the pace of modern life that causes so much stress. Go to a park and watch the children playing. Learn to play like they do, and what the heck, go get on a swing yourself.

14. If you need help, get an expert. When stress gets out of hand, professional help is available to you in your community. A list of public mental health facilities and organizations can be found in the Yellow Pages under "counseling" and "mental health."

Not all stress is bad. Stress is a fact of life. It's inescapable. And, to an extent, that's good. You'd be bored without some stress in your life!

Stress is your body's response to changes and to demands placed upon you. It's pressure from the outside that can make you feel tense on the inside. And this pressure doesn't come from just negative experiences--positive ones can also produce stress. A raise in pay, graduation from college, or a paid vacation can sometimes be just as stressful as losing your job, having trouble with your in-laws, or receiving a traffic ticket.

Stress can directly affect your emotional and physical health. And though some stress is normal and desirable, too much stress can make life difficult, and can sometimes cause physical illness.

But, you can deal with stress!

### **RECOMMENDED READING**

*The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook*, by Davis, Eshelman, & McKay

*Don't Sweat the Small Stuff . . . and It's All Small Stuff*, by Richard Carlson

*The Woman's Retreat Book* and *The Woman's Comfort Book*, by Jennifer Loudon

*Slowing Down to the Speed of Life*, by Richard Carlson & Joseph Bailey

*Touching Peace*, by Tich Nhat Hanh