10 Super Simple Ways to Defuse Stress

Tense? Anxious? Stressed out? Medical experts say these healthy habits can help you stay balanced.

December 4, 2013 By Kate Ferguson

Talk with family and friends. Don't underestimate the power of conversation. Reach out to friends and family by phone or text—or write a good old-fashioned letter.

Stay physically active. Run, walk, swim, bike, hike or dance. Regular exercise is a great stress reliever. It also keeps you mentally sharp and lowers your risk of depression.

Accept what you can't change. Instead of griping, focus on what you can do. Also, realize that it's possible to learn different skills and work toward new goals.

Laugh often. Indulge yourself with humor and don't be afraid to laugh aloud at jokes, check out a funny flick or catch a comedy show. Good to do even when you're alone, and even better with friends.

Say bye to bad habits. If you drink alcohol often, then cut back. Do you smoke? Quit. And restrict your caffeine intake.

Take it easy. Pace yourself and plan ahead. This'll give you enough time to get the really important things done.

Sleep until you're rested. Try to get at least six to eight hours of sleep each night. If it's tough getting shuteye, try exercising more because it can help you sleep better.

Organize your life. Tackle tasks one at a time. If you have a big project, start slowly and complete your task in small pieces.

Help others. If you have time to volunteer or do someone a favor, do so with grace. It's true what they say: It feels great to assist other people.

Stop worrying. Take each day as it comes and don't twist yourself in knots over problems—big and small.

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