

Stress Busters to Help You Relax



Easy-to-use stress busters to help put you back in control and maybe inspire you to create some stress busters of your own

Sit and do nothing for at least ten minutes every day.

Do something once a month just for you.

Dance - turn up the music and let yourself go.

Eat pounds of ripe melon, strawberries, cherries, and peaches.

Lie around in the park during your lunch break.

Enjoy the smell of freshly cut grass and suntan lotion.

Turn up the lights - light instantly energizes your body, mind and mood.

Stretch yourself out - gentle stretches increase blood circulation and alertness.

Make duplicate keys.

Robert S. Eliot, author of *From Stress to Strength* says, “most stress begins with a loss of control, which causes us to struggle either mentally or physically.”

Paul Wilson, author of *Instant Calm* says, “Life’s ups and downs aren’t all bad – they help us develop as human beings but there are times and situations when we crave the pleasure of being calm.”





Say "no" more often.
 Avoid negative people.
 Wake up to sunlight on your face.
 Buy daffodils in the spring.
 Walk to work and enjoy it.
 Get a pedicure.
 Drink lots of water.
 Laugh so hard your face hurts.
 Have a hot shower.
 Take a drive on a pretty road.
 Hear your favorite song on the radio.
 Smell hot towels fresh out of the dryer.
 Lie in bed listening to the rain outside.
 Run through a sprinkler.
 Have a cup of hot chocolate.
 Swing on a swing.
 Make eye contact with a cute stranger.
 Watch the sunrise (or the sunset).
 Prepare for the morning the night before.
 Avoid tight-fitting clothes.
 Repair anything that doesn't work properly.
 Ask for help with jobs you dislike.
 Look at problems as challenges.
 Play music that is slower than your pulse, which is likely to relax you.



Look at challenges differently.

Open the curtains, turn on the extra indoor lights, and maybe even step outside.

Smile.

Tickle a baby.

Watch the world go by from a sidewalk café.

Be happy that you don't know all the answers.

Teach a child to fly a kite.

Walk in the rain.

Schedule playtime into every day.

Take a bubble bath.

Ask a friend for a hug.

Say hello to a stranger.

Look up at the stars.

Buy yourself a flower.

Take time to smell the flower.

Feed the birds.

Memorize a joke.

Throw a paper airplane.

Clean out one closet.

Play pat-a-cake with a toddler.

Watch a movie and eat popcorn.

Go to a ball game and scream.

Keep a journal.

Cook a meal and eat it by candlelight.

Practice making a scary monster smile in a mirror.



Goof off - lime a little. "Limeing" is the Caribbean art of doing nothing guilt free. Throughout the day, give yourself a break. Daydream for five minutes. You'll return to your daily chores feeling more refreshed and less stressed.

Loosen your jaw. Head, neck, shoulder and back tension often originate from a tight jaw. To release jaw tension, lightly press your tongue to the roof of your mouth just behind your front teeth and your jaw muscles will immediately relax. Do this throughout the day and right before sleeping.

Do an activity that is rhythmic and repetitive yet productive to help shut off your brain's worry mechanism. Even chores like raking leaves, sweeping the porch or washing windows will work.

Sit or lie comfortably with your eyes closed. Breathe slowly and imagine something that you would like to happen that would make you more relaxed. Surround that fantasy with a pink bubble. Now let the bubble containing your vision go. Once it is free to float around in the universe, it will gather the energy needed to manifest itself to you.



Pop the bubble wrap next time you get a parcel in the mail. It's a fast, fun way to relieve tension.

Sit quietly and focus on where you feel the stress in your body. Locate it as specifically as possible. Be willing to merge with the discomfort. The goal is not to force tension out of your body, but to let it go. You may have to repeat this technique several times on a specific spot, but each time you'll feel looser and more relaxed.

Harvard research suggests that playing card games helps people calm down, squashes their worries dramatically, and delivers almost as much stress relief as exercising, because it takes your mind off whatever's troubling you. No more feeling guilty about playing solitaire on the computer.

When you have a migraine or just need to de-stress, a mustard foot bath can work wonders. When you have a headache, the blood vessels and nerves are inflamed. The warm water and mustard seed draws blood away from the head to the feet. Pour comfortably hot water into a basin, and add one teaspoon of freshly-ground mustard seed for every gallon of water. Soak your feet in the water with a thick towel over the basin to retain the heat for about twenty minutes.

Spend just thirty minutes daily to read, watch your favorite show or soak in the tub and you'll cut your cortisol levels and your irritability by 50% or more.

Enjoy a lemon mint foot bath to cool and invigorate your body. Cover the bottom of a basin with small river rocks. Fill the basin with lukewarm water. Add three or four drops of peppermint oil. Slice one whole lemon and add to the water along with fresh peppermint or spearmint leaves. Soak your feet in the basin while massaging your feet over the stones.

Inhale a few drops of peppermint sprinkled on a handkerchief as an energy booster.

To shake off a sudden slump walk around or jog in place for a few minutes with your arms stretched over your head.

To lower your anxiety level, place your thumb in the opposite hand and exhale. Take turns holding each thumb for a minute, breathing deeply as you switch.

On a high-stress-day put your watch on the wrist you don't normally wear it on. Every time you check the time, this small change will remind you to slow down and pace yourself.

If you find yourself tensing up as you talk, consciously bring your voice down a tone. You will feel calmer, because a high pitched voice invites stress.

Just stop for a few minutes. Even three to five minutes of stillness can be rejuvenating.

Make a list of your own healthy stress reducers, and read them every day. You'll feel better and stay healthier.