



## **25 Ways to Reduce Stress**

1. Spend time with your family and friends – it isn't an indulgence. How many people on their deathbed said "I wish I'd spent more time at the office"?
2. Exercise helps you to work away your stress. Aerobic exercise releases endorphins which are morphine-like substances associated with happiness and well-being. Exercise for 20 minutes three times a week.
3. Listen to Music...any music will do, as long as you like it. Music links straight to emotions so whether it is a calm piece of Mozart, or loud and crashing heavy rock, it will affect your mood accordingly either claming you down, or energising you to take action.
4. Laughter releases endorphins. This can help to boost your immune system, which means you'll be less prone to viral infections. Do something that will make you laugh.
5. Stress drains you of energy, so give your body the nutrients it needs to combat this. (Fruit, Vegetables, Grains). Reduce your intake of coffee and chocolate as these contain caffeine, a stimulant that causes a stress-like effect on the body.
6. Believe you can control your destiny. When we feel we don't have this control, it makes us frustrated and depressed. You always have a choice that can make a difference. Tell yourself you have several ways of approaching something.
7. Learn how to be assertive and say "No!" politely but firmly, to stressful demands on your time and energy.
8. Clear your desk. How much time do you spend looking for things? Once you take something from your in-tray, do one of the following to avoid wasted searching time: delegate it; create a file for it; take action, throw it away.
9. Drink lots of fresh water. This has a chemical effect that keeps you alert and fresh.
10. Control your finances. Surveys show that the main worry of adults is their finances. Research also shows that people trying to maintain life-styles they can't afford are more likely to have health problems. List all the enjoyable things you do that cost less than ten pounds.
11. Break big problems into small ones and tackle these one at a time.
12. Be content with who and what you are. Don't become miserable longing to be someone else.
13. Never take work home. Don't spend all your life slaving away to pay the mortgage on a house you only ever see in the dark. Work should be finished at work. If you take it home you will be stressed at home and will take it out on your family.



14. Always take a lunch break, even if it is only for 20 minutes. Get away from your workplace and ideally into the fresh air. You will come back energised to tackle the afternoon's work.
15. Remember that tense muscles are working muscles. Save energy for more important things. Unclench your jaw, relax your shoulders, uncross your legs and relax your attitude.
16. Having a perfectionist attitude "I must always be perfect in everything I do." is unrealistic and leads to unnecessary stress. We all make mistakes.
17. Take your watch off for the day and 'go with the flow' rather than constantly worrying about the time, where you should be and what you should be doing.
18. Stop talking yourself down, and congratulate yourself when things go well.
19. Only ever worry about things that you have some control over – and then take control of them. Change your behaviour to affect a change in your circumstances.
20. Practise deep breathing and relaxation techniques at regular intervals throughout the day. Just taking 5 minutes to close your eyes, un-tense your muscles and breathe deeply can help you tap into the extra resources you need.
21. Make conscious choices. If you want to work long hours to gain a promotion more than you want to relax in the evening with your family, then that is your choice. Accept it.
22. Go outside and shout at the top of your voice. Releasing all your pent-up tension in this way can provide great relief.
23. Take up a hobby that is totally different from your job, or learn something that is unrelated to work. This will allow your brain to focus on something else and take a well deserved 'holiday' from your normal stressors.
24. Change your activity. Do a puzzle, phone a friend, watch TV, just do something different for 10 minutes to give yourself a mental break.
25. Go for a walk. The fresh air and exercise will energise your mind and body.