

Proven Stress Reducers

1. Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning. The inevitable morning mishaps will be less stressful.



2. Prepare for the morning the evening before. Set the breakfast table, make lunches, put out the clothes you plan to wear, etc...



3. Don't rely on your memory. Write down appointment times, when to pick up the laundry, when library books are due, etc (The palest ink is better than the most retentive memory – Old Chinese Proverb)



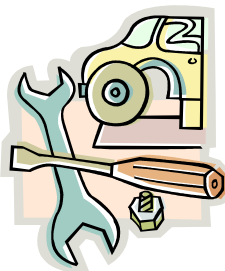
4. Do nothing which, after being done, leads you to tell a lie.



5. Make duplicates of all keys. Bury a house key in a secret spot in the garden and carry a duplicate car key in your wallet, apart from your key ring.



6. Practice preventative maintenance. Your car, appliances, home and relationships will be less likely to break down/fall apart "at the worst possible moment".



7. Be prepared to wait. A paperback can make a wait in a post office line almost pleasant.



8. Procrastination is stressful. Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do *today*; whatever you want to do today, do *now*.



9. Plan ahead. Don't let the gas tank get below one quarter full, keep a well stocked "emergency shelf" of home staples, don't wait until you're down to your last bus token or postage stamp to buy more, etc.



10. Don't put up with something that doesn't work right. If you alarm clock, wallet, shoe laces, windshield wipers – whatever – are a constant aggravation, get them fixed or get new ones.



11. Allow 15 minutes of extra time to get to appointments. Plan to arrive at an airport one hour before domestic departures.



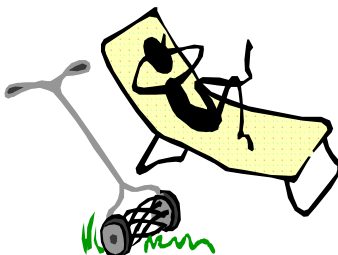
12. Eliminate (or restrict the amount of) caffeine in your diet.



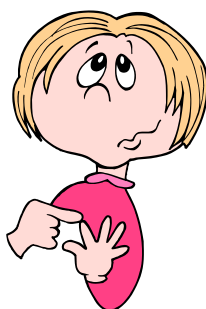
13. Always set up contingency plans, "just in case". (If for some reason either of us is delayed, here's what we'll do..." kind of thing. Or "If we get split up in the shopping centre, here's where we'll meet).



14. Relax your standards. The world will not end if the grass doesn't get mowed this weekend.



15. Pollyanna-Power! For every one thing that goes wrong, there are probably 10 or 50 or 100 blessings. Count them!



16. Ask questions. Taking a few moments to repeat back directions, what someone expects of you, etc, can save hours.

(The old "the hurrier I go, the behinder I get" idea).



17. Say "NO"!

Saying no to extra projects, social activities, and invitations you know you don't have the time or energy for takes practice, self respect, and a belief that everyone, everyday needs quiet time to relax and to be alone.



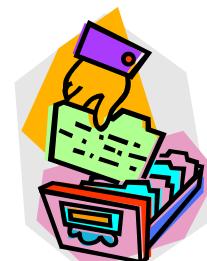
18. Unplug your phone. Want to take a long bath, meditate, sleep, or read without interruption? Drum up the courage to disconnect temporarily. (The possibility of there being a terrible emergency in the next hour or so is almost nil).



22. Get up and stretch periodically if your job requires that you sit for extended periods.



25. Create order out of chaos. Organise your home and workspace so that you always know exactly where things are. Put things away where they belong and you won't have to go through the stress of losing things.



19. Turn "needs" into preferences. Our basic physical needs translate into food, water, and keeping warm. Everything else is a preference. Don't get attached to preferences.

20. Simplify, simplify, simplify.

23. Wear earplugs. If you need to find quiet at home, pop in some earplugs.

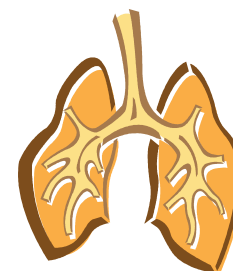


26. When feeling stressed, most people tend to breathe in short, shallow breaths. When you breathe like this, stale air is not expelled, oxidation of the tissues is incomplete and muscle tension frequently results. Check your breathing throughout the day, and *before, during and after* high pressure situations. If you find your stomach muscles are knotted and your breathing is shallow, relax all your muscles and take several deep, slow breaths. Note how, when you are relaxed, *both* your abdomen and chest expand when you breathe.

21. Make friends with non worriers. Nothing can get you into the habit of worrying faster than association with chronic worrywarts.



24. Get enough sleep. If necessary, use an alarm clock to remind you to go to bed.



27.

Writing your thoughts and feelings down (in a journal, or on paper to be thrown away) can help you clarify things and can give you a renewed perspective.



Inoculate yourself against a feared event. Example; before speaking in public, take time to go over every part of the experience in your mind. Imagine what you will wear, what the audience will look like, how you will present your talk, what the questions will be and how you will answer them, etc. Visualise the experience the way you would have it be. You will likely find that when the time comes to make the actual presentation, it will be old hat and much of your anxiety will have fled.



Talk it out. Discussing your problems with a trusted friend can help clear your mind of confusion so you can concentrate on problem solving.



28. Try the following yoga technique whenever you feel the need to relax:

inhale deeply through your nose to the count of eight.

Then, with lips puckered, exhale very slowly through your mouth to the count of 16, or for as long as you can.

Concentrate on the long sighing sound and feel the tension dissolve. Repeat 10 times.



30. When the stress of having to get a job done gets in the way of getting the job done, diversion – a voluntary change in activity and or environment – may be just what you need.



32. One of the most obvious ways to avoid unnecessary stress is to select an environment (work, home, leisure) that is in line with your personal needs and desires. If you hate desk jobs, don't accept a job which requires that you sit at a desk all day. If you hate to talk politics, don't associate with people who love to talk politics, etc.



33. Learn to live one day at a time.



29.

31.

34.

Every day, do something you really enjoy.



35. Add an ounce of love to everything you do.



36. Take a hot bath or shower (or a cool one, in summertime) to relieve tension.



37. Do something for somebody else.



38.

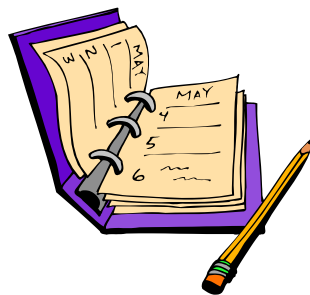
Focus on understanding rather than on being understood, on loving rather than on being loved.



39. Do something that will improve your appearance. Looking better can help you feel better.

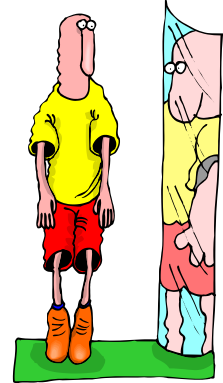


40. Schedule a realistic day. Avoid the tendency to schedule back to back appointments; allow time between appointments for a breathing spell.



41. Become more flexible. Some things are worth *not* doing perfectly and some issues are appropriate to compromise upon.

42. Eliminate destructive self talk. "I'm too old to..." or "I'm too fat to..." Etc.

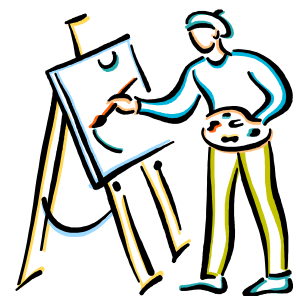


43. Use your weekend time for a change of pace.

If your work week is slow and patterned, make sure there is action and time for spontaneity built into your weekends. If your work week is fast paced and full of people and deadlines, seek peace and solitude during your days off.

Feel as if you aren't accomplishing anything tangible at work?

Tackle a job on the weekend which you can finish to your satisfaction.



44.

Worry about the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves. That's another way of saying take care of the today's as best you can and the yesterdays and tomorrows will take care of themselves.



If an especially "unpleasant" task faces you, do it early in the day and get it over with. Then the rest of your day will be free from anxiety.



Forget about counting to 10. Count to 1,000 before doing something or saying anything that could make matters worse.



45. Do one thing at a time. When you are with someone, be with that person and with on one or nothing else. When you are busy with a project, concentrate on doing that project and forget about everything else you have to do.



48. Learn to delegate responsibility to capable others.



51. Have a forgiving view of events and people. Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world.



46. Allow yourself time – every day – for privacy, quiet and introspection.



49. Don't forget to take a lunch break. Try to get away from your desk or work area in body and mind, even if its just for 15 or 20 minutes.



52. Have an optimistic view of the world. Believe that most people are doing the best they can.



50.

47.