

How to reduce your stress levels

Simple everyday ways to de-stress and relax

Stress has now been linked to an increased risk of developing Alzheimer's, and on a day to day basis it can make your life miserable. You might not always even feel stressed, but it can manifest in [all sorts of symptoms](#), both subtle and severe. Here are some easy ways to keep calm.

Exercise

You're stressed because you don't have time to do everything, right? And working out generally gets pushed to the bottom of the list. But it's worth ditching something else less essential and making sure you get at least 30 minutes of exercise three times a week. It might feel a slog to begin with but both the physical and mental benefits of exercise are proven. Plus, it'll give you breathing space where you're not contactable by your mobile and can get out all your aggression. And it doesn't have to be the gym, try kickboxing classes, climbing walls or canoeing to combine activity with learning a new skill, which will give you something else to focus on.

Deep muscle relaxation

This takes about 20 minutes but if everything's getting on top of you it's worth locking yourself away to concentrate on calming down. Begin by taking some deep breaths. Then focus on a part of your body, such as one foot. Tense all the muscles in your foot as tightly as possible and count to 10. Then relax it and enjoy the feeling of all the tension flowing away. Repeat this for the other foot and move your way up your body a muscle group at a time, allowing your whole body to become relaxed.

Talk to people

Sharing your worries really can help reduce the burden. Allowing people the chance to help take some of your responsibilities off your hands may also make a real difference to the causes of your stress. It's tempting to think it'll be easier if you do everything yourself, but discussing problems can crystallize what you need to do and hearing other people's points of view can put things in perspective.

Be nice

There's some evidence that just doing someone a favor can be good for your stress levels. Being kind to someone or helping out can improve your wellbeing and make you feel better. Attending to other people's concerns and problems can make yours seem more manageable.

Schedule tasks in priority order

It's time for that old faithful, the To Do List. Rather than making you panic about everything you have to do, write down a schedule with tasks in priority order so you feel like you can realistically take them on. Just by writing it down, you've made a start and that should make you feel better.

<http://uk.lifestyle.yahoo.com/de-stress-at-home-relax-calm-down.html>