

STRESS MANAGEMENT GUIDE FOR TINNITUS

By James and Timothy Tylor
www.StopTinnitusForever.com

Stop Your Tinnitus Forever
By Living a Stress-Free Life
Everyday!

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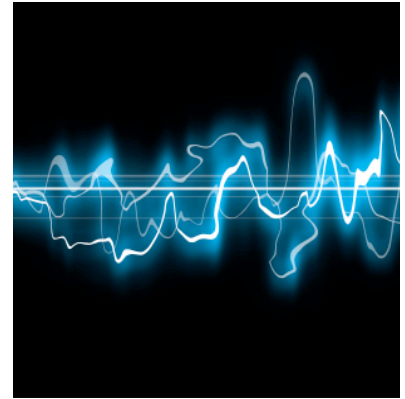
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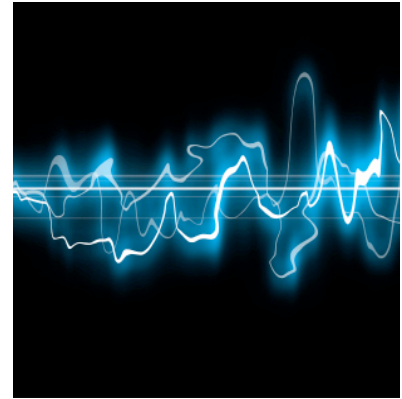
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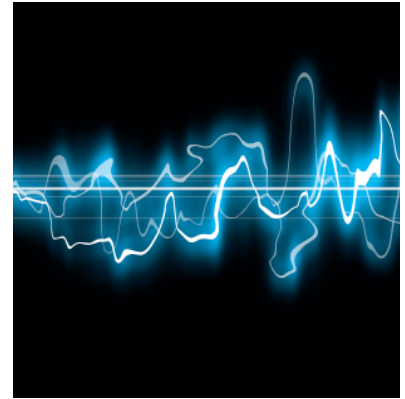
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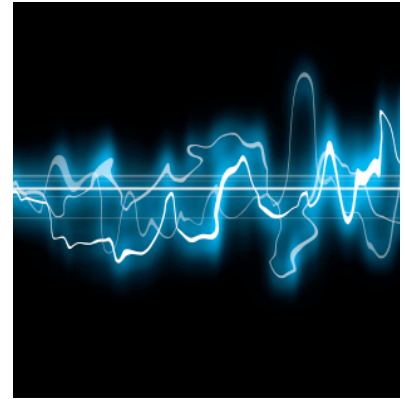
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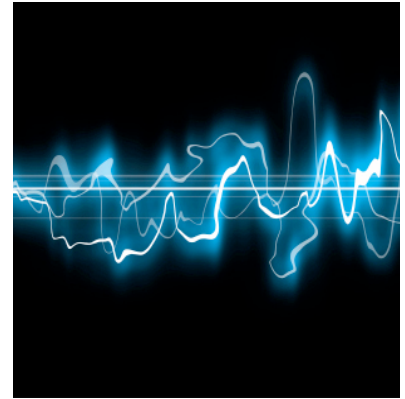
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Stop Tinnitus Forever Stress Management Guide

Introduction

It seems like you hear it all the time from nearly every one you know – “I’m SO stressed out!” Pressures abound in this world today. Those pressures cause stress and anxiety, and often we are ill-equipped to deal with those stressors that trigger anxiety and other feelings that can make us sick. Literally, sick.

The statistics are staggering. One in every eight Americans age 18-54 suffers from an anxiety disorder. This totals over 19 million people! Research conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health has shown that anxiety disorders are the number one mental health problem among American women and are second only to alcohol and drug abuse by men.

Women suffer from anxiety and stress almost twice as much as men. Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in America, surpassing even depression in numbers. Anxiety is the most common mental health issue facing adults over 65 years of age. Anxiety disorders cost the U.S. \$46.6 billion annually. Anxiety sufferers see an average of five doctors before being successfully diagnosed.

Unfortunately, stress and anxiety go hand in hand. In fact, one of the major symptoms of stress is anxiety. And stress accounts for 80 percent of all illnesses either directly or indirectly.

In fact, stress is more dangerous than we thought. You've probably heard that it can raise your blood pressure, increasing the likelihood of a stroke in the distant future, but recently a health insurance brochure claimed that 90 percent of visits to a primary care physician were stress-related disorders.

Health Psychology magazine reports that chronic stress can interfere with the normal function of the body's immune system. And studies have proven that stressed individuals have an increased vulnerability to catching an illness and are more susceptible to allergic, autoimmune, or cardiovascular diseases.

Doctors agree that during chronic stress, the functions of the body that are nonessential to survival, such as the digestive and immune systems, shut down. "This is why people get sick," he says. "There are also many occurrences of psychosomatic illness, an illness with an emotional or psychological side to it."

Furthermore, stress often prompts people to respond in unhealthy ways such as smoking, drinking alcohol, eating poorly, or becoming physically inactive. This damages the body in addition to the wear and tear of the stress itself.

Stress is a part of daily life. It's how we react to it that makes all the difference in maintaining our health and well-being. Pressures occur throughout life and those pressures cause stress. You need to realize that you will never completely get rid of stress in your life, but you can learn coping techniques to turn that stress into a healthier situation.

When I first got the assignment to write this book, I immediately thought, "Sure, you can eliminate stress and anxiety by locking yourself into a room and never talking to anyone ever again". But that wouldn't make a very informative book, now would it?

I have suffered from anxiety disorders caused by stress for years. I have learned somewhat how to cope with that although I'm always learning new things and dealing mechanisms. So what I've done in this book is taken some of my own experiences and combined them with advice from experts to give you tools that will help you in stressful situations.

I've also outlined different ways you can face debilitating anxiety and panic attacks that many people suffer from. While researching this book, I've come across some amazing information and can't wait to share it with you. I've learned so much myself, so let's look at how to eliminate stress and anxiety from your life!

Why Are We So Stressed Out?



We're living in very trying and difficult times and things don't seem to be getting any easier. Sometimes life can seem terribly painful and unfair, yet somehow we manage to struggle on, day after day, hoping and praying that things will soon get better.

But day by day the world is becoming a crazier and more uncertain place to live in, not to mention stressful. Nothing seems safe anymore. Millions of people are in record levels of debt. Many are losing their jobs, their homes, their health and sometimes even their sanity. Worry, depression and anxiety seem to have become a way of life for way too many people.

Entering the Age of Anxiety

We seem to have entered the Age of Anxiety. In fact, in 2002, the cover of Time magazine proclaimed this loud and clear on one of their covers as the featured story in that issue. The constant stress and uncertainties of living in the 21st century have certainly taken their toll, and as a result many of us seem to live a life of constant fear and worry.

When the terrorist attacks happened on September 11, this constant stress and worry seemed to just be magnified. In fact, many people even now four years later report they are still scared that something of that magnitude could happen again – perhaps closer to them.

Turn on the news or open up a newspaper and we are bombarded with disturbing images and stories. We begin to wonder if we are safe anywhere. In this, the information age, never before have we had so much access to so much data.

Sluggish Economy

The economy is another stressor. Our country is in debt and so are many Americans. Soaring gas prices, outrageous housing costs, even the cost of food has sent many Americans to work in jobs that are unsatisfying and tedious. They work these jobs because they need a paycheck. Today, it's more important to bring home the bacon rather than work in a dream career.

Having more women in the workplace adds to the stress. So many women feel the need to be everything to everyone and that includes a paycheck earner, house keeper, mom, wife, daughter, and sibling. The only problem with that is some women just don't make any time for themselves thus contributing to their stress levels being at an all-time high.

Competitive Heats Up

Even children can feel the pressure of stress and anxiety. Teenagers who want to go to college find themselves pushing themselves during their studies to try and obtain scholarships so they can attend schools that have ever increasing tuition costs.

They find themselves having to hold down part-time jobs on top of all that to earn money for extras that their parents can no longer afford. Add peer pressure into the mix and you have a veritable pressure cooker!

Cell phones, internet, palm pilots, blackberries, i-pods – we are always on the go and always reachable. We don't make time to relax and enjoy life any more. Why not? We certainly should!

Doing Things Against Our Wishes

We feel pressure to do these things because we think we HAVE to, not because we WANT to. All too often, it's difficult for people to just say "No". Not saying that one little word piles up un-needed expectations and obligations that make us feel anxious.

All of us will experience situations that may cause us to become stressed or feel anxious. The reasons are too many to note but can include, buying a property, having guests stay over (in-laws!), being bullied, exams, looking after children, managing finances, relationship issues, traveling etc.

Stress is a 'normal' function of everyday life. Only when it appears to take over our lives does it then become a problem.

Are You In Control of the Pressure?

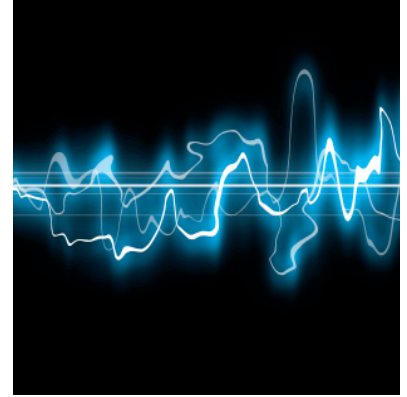
Everyone will have different reasons why a situation causes them pressure. As a rule it's usually when we don't feel in control of a situation, then we feel its grip tightening around us causing us to feel worried or 'stressed'.

If stress is caused by us not feeling in control of a situation, the answer is to try and reverse this, and regain that control. The good news is: YOU CAN!

You have everything inside you that you need to overcome your stress and the accompanying anxiety. The problem is, often we don't realize that we are in control because we feel so out of control at time. But the tools are there, you just have to use them.

Let's first look at the barriers we put up that are preventing us from becoming healthy and getting rid of our anxiety and stress.

What Is Stress?



Stress is when your peace of mind is interrupted and your emotions are worked up. You can feel stress in your home, work or your child can feel stress at school. If not handled properly, it can mess with our minds and our health.

Stress feels like you are carrying a large burden on your shoulders. You have a lot of responsibilities that seem like it all falls toward you and no one else. You have feelings of anxiety and frustration.

There are times when you will get angry because so much has come upon you and it seems to be overwhelming. You feel overpowered to do anything so it's easy for you to get into worrying about things that you can't control.

It doesn't have to be big things that will cause stress. It could be some of the smallest things that can set you off to get tense.

Causes Of Stress



There are different things and events that can cause you to be stressed. What may cause stress for one person may not be the same for someone else. It's basically different strokes for different folks when it comes to stress.

Stress can be physical, internal, emotional and external. They can be caused by a loss you've experienced, overworking yourself, sickness, arguments and other problems that you face.

You can also experience stress from office politics. This is not something that you should get involved in. It is not good for you mentally, especially if you're dealing with other problems. Office politics can be very brutal and you have to know how to deal with it. The last thing you want to do is to bring it home with you.

Another cause of stress is lack of finances. You or your spouse always seems to be at odds about the finances and budgeting. You like to save, while he likes to spend. The old saying is true about saving for a rainy day.

However, your spouse likes to spend because the money is there. He could care less about saving money when he'll really need it. You on the other hand, are constantly after him about that. The interaction often ends up into a verbal argument. This doesn't solve anything for either party. It's understandable why you would be stressed about this.

Then, you don't have enough money to pay bills so you end up robbing Peter to pay Paul. That is frustrating by itself without having the spouse involved. You need to have money to pay the bills and pay them on time.

If you or someone in your family has a chronic illness, you constantly have to take them to the doctor. That's more money out of your pocket because you have to pay the fee prior to the doctor visit. Then, the doctor may have to prescribe medicine, depending what the health issue is. That's another expense to dread.

For wealthy people, they have to deal with taking care of their large mass of money. Of course, there are those who know they have the money and are always looking to mooch from them. On the other hand, there are those who are not wealthy and work to keep what they have and bring in more money. It can be a struggle on both ends.

You could be stressed about being a people pleaser. You're the type of person that doesn't want anyone mad at you, so you work to keep everyone in your circle happy. That can stress you out because while you're struggling to keep them happy, you don't have time for yourself to do the things you need to do. That can be very frustrating.

If you have children, they may feel stressed from the pressure of working to keep their grades up so that they can get all A's. There are some parents that are obsessed with their children getting all A's that they constantly hound them and keep them in their schoolbooks. It seems as though they don't have a life out of school.

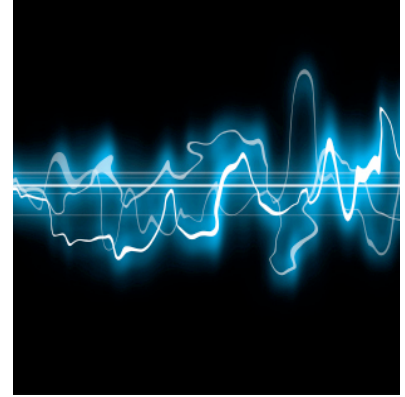
Sometimes, people bring stress on themselves. People get engrossed about concerns and worries that are beyond the scope of what they can do. Or they worry about things that they shouldn't be worried about. They're trivial and unnecessary.

They invite stress in by complaining and murmuring. They think about the negative stuff and think that there's no way out. They allow too much tension to build up in their system.

Here are some other things that can cause stress in your life:

- Job termination or layoff
- Illness
- Injury
- Separation from boyfriend or spouse
- Divorce
- Imprisonment
- Bereavement of a loved one
- Toxic relationships
- Great concern for others
- Rejection
- Pregnancy
- Retirement
- Daily traffic grind

Blocking Behaviors Which Keeps Your Stress Alive



There are three obsessive behaviors that you are likely to be engaging in that impeded your healing process and stop you from enjoying a stress-free life. Recognizing these barriers can be a great first step toward getting rid of the problems that go with being too stressed.

Blocking Behaviors

Obsessive Negativity

The first is obsessive negativity. When you are obsessively negative, it means that you have a tendency toward being "negative" about people, places, situations, and things in your life. Perhaps you find yourself saying things like "I can't do this!" or "No one understands!" or "Nothing ever works!", for example.

You may be doing this unconsciously, but essentially you have what's known as a "sour grapes" attitude, and it holds you back from knowing what it's like to view life from a positive lens and enjoy the beauty in yourself and people around you! There's a whole world out there for you...with happiness and positive thinking.

Obsessive Perfection

Then you have obsessive perfectionism. When you engage in obsessive perfectionism, you are centered on trying to do everything "just so" to the point of driving yourself into an anxious state of being. You may find yourself making statements such as, "I have to do this right, or I'll be a failure!" or "If I am not precise, people will be mad at me!" Again, this behavior may be totally under the threshold of your awareness, but it interferes greatly with your ability to enjoy things without feeling "uptight" and "stressed."

Obsessive Analysis

Finally there is obsessive analysis. When you are obsessed about analyzing things, you find yourself wanting to re-hash a task or an issue over and over again. For instance, you might find yourself making statements such as, "I need to look this over, study it, and know it inside and out...or else I can't relax!" or "If I relax and let things go without looking them over repeatedly, things go wrong!"

While analytical thinking is an excellent trait, if it's done in excess you never get to stop and smell the roses because you're too busy trying to analyze everything and everyone around you. Gaining insight into this type of behavior is one of the most important keys to letting go of stress, and getting complete power over your anxiety.

Remove Blocking Behaviors

If you find yourself engaging in any of the above "Blocking Behaviors", there are two things you can do to help yourself. First, ask the people you know, love, and trust, "Am I negative about things?", "Do I complain a lot?", and "Am I difficult to be around?"

This may be hard for you to listen to, as the truth sometimes hurts a great deal. But the insight you will get from others' assessment of you is invaluable, and you'll know precisely how others see you. Accept their comments as helpful info, and know that you will gain amazing insights from what you hear.

Second, keep a journal to write down and establish patterns of when you are using "blocking behaviors." Even if you are not thrilled with the idea of writing, you can make little entries into a note book or journal each day. The great part is that you'll begin to see patterns in your behavior that reveal exactly what you're doing to prevent yourself from curing your anxiety.

We'll give you some great stress busting techniques later in the book, but you need to recognize these blockages first so you can move into the "healing" stage and conquer your stress and anxiety.

Many people think that stress and anxiety are the same thing. This couldn't be further from the truth!

The Effects Of Stress



Stress can affect people physically if they don't learn to deal with it. It can really affect their health. They can experience headaches, ailments of the stomach and diabetes. In order for people to remain healthy, the immune system needs to be healthy and working properly.

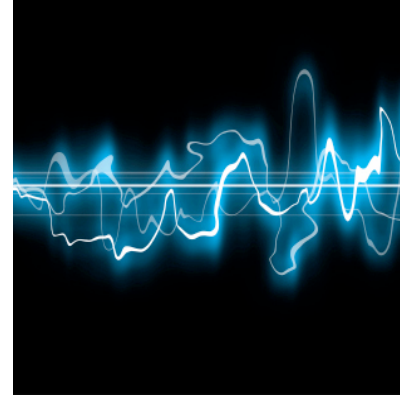
When people allow stress to affect them, they set themselves up for anything to happen. One of the more common health issues they face is ulcers. Ulcers can affect what you eat, which can cause weight gain or loss.

They can also experience the following:

- Backaches
- Pain in the neck
- Pain in the muscles
- High blood pressure
- Chest pains

If any of these problems persist, they should see a physician.

Warning Signs



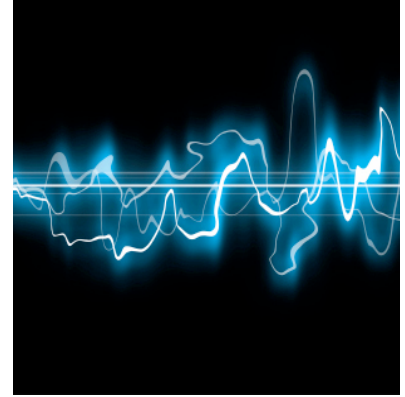
There are some warning signs that tell on you. One is that your appetite changes. You may be stressed if you're not eating as much and have lost weight. Or you're eating more than usual and gaining weight.

You start feeling tired or are experiencing anxiety. You feel drained and haven't gotten enough rest. You're more concerned about problems that you can't control or wondering how they're going to turn out. You're not sleeping well, if at all.

Your muscles are aching or you have headaches that won't stop. You can't concentrate on the item at hand and allow yourself to be constantly distracted. You start to drink alcohol heavily or get addicted to drugs.

Once you realized that these things are affecting you, you should get help as soon as possible.

Lingering Stress



Some people have stress for a long time and become immune to it. Or they may become stress-free from a previous situation and end up finding themselves in the same boat. It gets to the point where it becomes habitual, like smoking cigarettes.

Enduring stress for the long term is not good for your health. You can end up having problems with your cardiovascular system and your blood pressure could skyrocket. One of both of these things can put your health at risk.

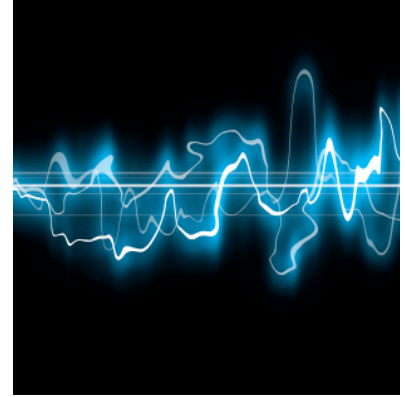
You may also experience mood swings because you allowed the stress to get to you for so long. You don't feel like doing much of anything like you used to. Or you just don't feel like being around anyone.

There are solutions to long-term stress. One thing you can do is change your lifestyle. If you tend to overeat when you get stressed, reverse that and set up a meal plan where you eat sensibly.

Stop focusing on the negative side of things that are happening in your life and deal with the positive. Once you make these simple changes, you will be on the road to recovery.

If you continue to feel stressed at work, you may need to seek medical attention or get some time off from work.

Questionnaire Time



Before you begin here, let us tell you that we are not medical professionals. This information has come from reliable sources and isn't meant to be a complete diagnostic tool in any way. These quizzes are simply guidelines to help you recognize any problems you might have and be able to effectively deal with those problems.

Questionnaire for Depression

Because depression can be the most serious of our topics, let's start by seeing if you may be depressed. Keep in mind that everyone has their "blue" days. The thing that separates clinical depression from simple melancholy is that the symptoms occur over a period of time. They don't come and go, they stay around for awhile and can affect your life adversely.

Ask yourself the following questions. Answer yes if you've been feeling this way consistently over a period of two weeks.

Do you find yourself constantly sad?

Are you un-motivated to do simple things like shower, clean up the house, or make dinner?

Do people tell you you're overly irritable?

Do you have trouble concentrating?

Are you feeling isolated from family and friends even when they are around you?

Have you lost interest in your favorite activities?

Do you feel hopeless, worthless, or guilty for no reason at all?

Are you always tired and have trouble sleeping?

Has your weight fluctuated significantly?

If you can answer “Yes” to five or more of these questions, you could be suffering from clinical depression. It is important for you to seek out the help of a medical professional whether that be a doctor or a therapist. There are many medications out there that can help with depression.

I always tried to deny my own depression, but once I began taking an anti-depressant, I couldn't believe what a difference that one pill a day made! It gave me freedom from the “black hole” I had fallen into and helped me enjoy life again, so if you think you are depressed, ACT NOW! You deserve to be happy!

Questionnaire for Stress

But this book is about stress and anxiety, so let's see if you are overly stressed out. Ask yourself the following:

Do you worry constantly and cycle with negative self-talk?

Do you have difficulty concentrating?

Do you get mad and react easily?

Do you have recurring neck or headaches?

Do you grind your teeth?

Do you frequently feel overwhelmed, anxious or depressed?

Do you feed your stress with unhealthy habits-eating or drinking excessively, smoking, arguing, or avoiding yourself and life in other ways?

Do small pleasures fail to satisfy you?

Do you experience flashes of anger over a minor problem?

If you can answer “Yes” to most of these questions, then you do have excessive stress in your life. The good news is that you’ve bought this book and will learn many valuable techniques to cope with that stress. But we’ll get to that later!

Questionnaire for Anxiety

Let’s move on to anxiety.

Do you experience shortness of breath, heart palpitation or shaking while at rest?

Do you have a fear of losing control or going crazy?

Do you avoid social situations because of fear?

Do you have fears of specific objects?

Do you fear that you will be in a place or situation from which you cannot escape?

Do you feel afraid of leaving your home?

Do you have recurrent thoughts or images that refuse to go away?

Do you feel compelled to perform certain activities repeatedly?

Do you persistently relive an upsetting event from the past?

Answering “Yes” to more than four of these questions can indicate an anxiety disorder.

Take Action Now

Suffering from depression, too much stress, or excessive anxiety can endanger your overall health and it’s time to take steps to overcome this – RIGHT NOW!

Stress and anxiety affects many factors in our body not only in our mental state. Cancer and other deadly diseases are related to stress and anxiety because of the changes in the chemical composition in our body due to stress and anxiety.

You don't have to be a victim of stress and anxiety, its just all about discipline and having a proper schedule. Not taking in anything you cannot handle will be a lot of help. Learn your limitations and stick to it. Do not over exert yourself. Just try to go over the border an inch at a time.

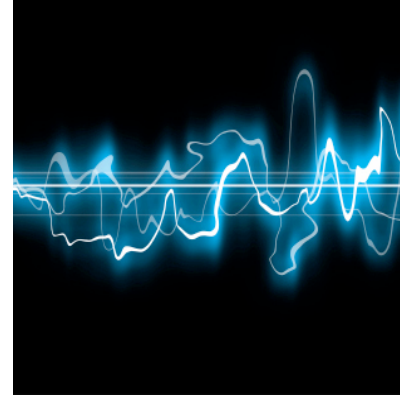
You can lead a productive successful and fulfilling life and career without the need to endanger your health. If not, you are not only killing yourself, you are also sending your family and friends and all the people around you away.

Stress is a natural part of life. It can be both physical and mental and much of it can come from everyday pressures. Everyone handles stress differently, some better than others.

Left unchecked, however, stress can cause physical, emotional, and behavioral disorders which can affect your health, vitality, and peace-of-mind, as well as personal and professional relationships.

As we've said, stress and anxiety can lead to panic attacks. Speaking from experience, I can tell you that having a panic attack can be a serious situation. Let's explore that subject a little more.

Stress And Panic Attacks



Stress can cause you to have panic attacks. If you are the type of person that intensely worries about things, then you could be at risk. Panic attacks are born out of fear that something bad will happen. You start to stress out more than you normally would.

When you feel you're having a panic attack, you start to feel dizzy and your heart will accelerate.

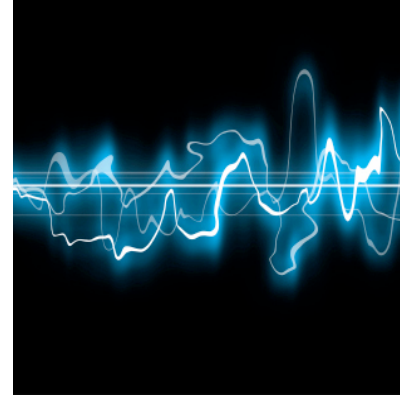
Other signs that you may be having a panic attack include:

- Nausea
- Feeling of paralysis (can't move)
- Breathing difficulties
- Sweaty hand and palms
- Increased Tension
- Palpitations
- A pounding heart, or an accelerated heart rate
- Sweating

- Trembling or shaking
- Shortness of breath
- A choking sensation
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Nausea or stomach cramps
- De-realization (a feeling of unreality)
- Fear of losing control or going crazy
- Fear of dying
- Numbness or a tingling sensation in your face and limbs
- Chills or hot flashes

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Dealing With Panic Attacks



If you have panic attacks, it may help to comfort you that you are not alone! You're not even one in a million. In America, it is estimated that almost 5% of the population suffer from some form of anxiety disorder.

For some, it may be the infrequent panic attacks that only crop up in particular situations-like when having to speak in front of others, while, for other people, it can be so frequent and recurring that it inhibits them from leaving their home. Frequent panic attacks often develop into what medical physicians refer to as an "anxiety disorder."

There are many ways of coping with an anxiety disorder. Some may not work for you, but others just might. It helps to know some of the most common coping techniques for dealing with panic attacks when they begin.

Recognize the Start of a Panic Attack

Your first step is to recognize when a panic attack is about to begin. When you have enough of them, you start to really pay attention to the tingling sensation, the shortness of breath, and the disconnection from the real life around you.

Many people I talk to wonder what that disconnection is like. They have a hard time understanding it. Those of us who have panic attacks are all too familiar with it. It's like you can look at a solid object and see that it is there. You know it's there, but a part of your mind doubts that it really IS there.

You may find yourself reaching out to touch that object just to be sure. You feel like you're not a part of the world around you. It's as if you are just a spectator in your own life with no control over anything around you.

Believe me, this is a horrible feeling.

Combatting Panic Attacks

So how do you start trying to combat your panic attacks? What if I told you the trick to ending panic and anxiety attacks is to WANT to have one. That sounds strange, even contradictory, doesn't it? But the want really does help push it away.

Does this mean that you should be able to bring on a panic attack at this very moment? Absolutely not! What it means is that when you are afraid of something – in this case a panic attack – it will more than likely appear and wreak havoc. When you stand up to the attack, your chances of fending it off are much greater.

If you resist a situation out of fear, the fear around that issue will persist. How do you stop resisting—you move directly into it, into the path of the anxiety, and by doing so it cannot persist.

In essence what this means is that if you daily voluntarily seek to have a panic attack, you cannot have one. Try in this very moment to have a panic attack and I will guarantee you cannot. You may not realize it but you have always decided to panic. You make the choice by saying this is beyond my control whether it be consciously or sub-consciously.

Another way to appreciate this is to imagine having a panic attack as like standing on a cliff's edge. The anxiety seemingly pushes you closer to falling over the edge. To be rid of the fear you must metaphorically jump. You must jump off the cliff edge and into the anxiety and fear and all the things that you fear most.

How do you jump? You jump by wanting to have a panic attack. You go about your day asking for anxiety and panic attacks to appear.

Panic Attacks Are Not Harmful

Your real safety is the fact that a panic attack will never harm you. That is a medical fact. You are safe, the sensations are wild but no harm will come to you. Your heart is racing but no harm will come to you. The jump becomes nothing more than a two foot drop! It's perfectly safe.

Anxiety causes an imbalance in your life whereby all of the mental worry creates a top-heavy sensation. All of your focus is moved from the center of your body to the head. Schools of meditation often like to demonstrate an example of this top-heavy imbalance by showing how easily the body can lose its sense of center.

Deep Breathing

The key to overcoming panic attacks is to relax. That's easy to say but difficult to do. A good way to do this is to concentrate on your breathing making sure it is slow and steady. One of the first signs of a panic attack is difficulty breathing, and you may find yourself panting to catch a breath. When you focus on making those breaths even, your heart rate will slow down and the panic will subside.

Breathing more slowly and deeply has a calming effect. A good way to breathe easier is to let all the air out of your lungs. This forces your lungs to reach for a deeper breath next time. Continue to focus on your out-breath, letting all the air out of your lungs and soon you'll find your breathing is deeper and you feel calmer.

Ideally, you want to take the focus off the fact that you are having a panic attack. Try to press your feet, one at a time, into the ground. Feel how connected and rooted they are to the ground.

An even better way is to lie down with your bottom near a wall. Place your feet against the wall (your knees are bent) and press your feet one at a time into the wall. If you can breathe in as you press your foot against the wall, and breathe out as you release it, it will be more effective. You should alternate between your feet. Do this for 10 - 15 minutes or until the panic subsides.

Use all of your senses to take full notice of what you see, hear, feel, and smell in your environment. This will help you to remain present. Panic is generally associated with remembering upsetting events from the past or anticipating something upsetting in the future. Anything that helps keep you focused in the present will be calming. Try holding a pet; looking around your room and noticing the colors, textures, and shapes; listening closely to the sounds you hear; call a friend; or smell the smells that are near you.

Aromatherapy

Many people strongly advocate aromatherapy to deal with panic and anxiety. Lavender can have an especially calming and soothing effect when you smell it. You can find essential oil of lavender at many stores. Keep it handy and take a sniff when you start feeling anxious.

Try putting a few drops of lavender essence oil into some oil (olive or grape seed oil will do) and rub on your body. Keep a prepared mixture in a dark glass bottle for when you need it. You can even prepare several bottles, with a small one to carry with you.

Other essential oils known to help panic and panic attacks are helichrysum, frankincense, and marjoram. Smell each of them, and use what smells best to you, or a combination of your favorite oils mixed in olive or grape seed oil.

Always Be Prepared

You may want to prepare yourself BEFORE a panic attack happens. When you're not in a panicked state, make a list of the things that you're afraid will happen. Then write out calming things that tell you the opposite of your fears. Then you can repeat these things to yourself when the panic starts to come.

Prepare a list of things to do in case of panicked feelings, and it will be ready for you when you need it. Fill it with lots of soothing messages and ideas of calming things to do. I find this to be a very helpful tool and am never without my small notebook that has these positive affirmations in it.

Find some people that can depend on for support. You need people that have your back and will rally around you when the going gets tough.

If you have these symptoms consistently, you should consult with your physician to find out what's going on. More than likely, it can be due to stress levels that increase in intensity.

If your physician finds out that's the case, then they may prescribe you with some medicine to get rid of the panic attacks. The sooner you get help for this, the better chance you have of being stress-free sooner than later.

Panic can be a very scary thing to go through, especially if you're alone. Preparing for when the panic comes can really help reduce the panic, and even sometimes help to prevent it.

Another great tool to combating anxiety and stress is to use visualization.

Stress or Anxiety



Contrary to popular belief, there is a difference between stress and anxiety. Stress comes from the pressures we feel in life, as we are pushed by work or any other task that puts undue pressure on our minds and body, adrenaline is released, extended stay of the hormone causes depression, a rise in the blood pressure and other negative changes and effects.

What is Anxiety?

One of these negative effects is anxiety. With anxiety, fear overcomes all emotions accompanied by worry and apprehension, making a person a recluse and a bagful of jitters. Other symptoms are chest pains, dizziness, and shortness of breath and panic attacks.

Stress is caused by an existing stress-causing factor or stressor. Anxiety is stress that continues after that stressor is gone. Stress can come from any situation or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, nervous, or even anxious. What is stressful to one person is not necessarily stressful to another.

Anxiety is a feeling of apprehension or fear and is almost always accompanied by feelings of impending doom. The source of this uneasiness is not always known or recognized, which can add to the distress you feel.

What is Stress?

Stress is the way our bodies and minds react to something which upsets our normal balance in life; an example of stress is the response we feel when we are frightened or threatened. During stressful events our adrenal glands release adrenaline, a hormone which activates our body's defense mechanisms causing our hearts to pound, blood pressure to rise, muscles to tense, and the pupils of our eyes to dilate.

A principal indication of increased stress is an escalation in your pulse rate; however, a normal pulse rate doesn't necessarily mean you aren't stressed. Constant aches and pains, palpitations, anxiety, chronic fatigue, crying, over or under-eating, frequent infections, and a decrease in your sexual desire are signs you may notice which indicate you may be under stress.

Of course, every time we are under stress, we do not react to such an extreme and we are not always under such great duress or fear every time we are confronted with a stressful situation.

People Who Faces Stress and Anxiety

Who Faces Stress?

Some people are more susceptible than others to stress; for some, even ordinary daily decisions seem insurmountable. Deciding what to have for dinner or what to buy at the store, is a seemingly, monumental dilemma for them. On the other hand, there are those people, who seem to thrive under stress by becoming highly productive being driven by the force of pressure.

Research shows women with children have higher levels of stress related hormones in their blood than women without children. Does this mean women without children don't experience stress? Absolutely not!

It means that women without children may not experience stress as often or to the same degree which women with children do. This means for women with children, it's particularly important to schedule time for yourself; you will be in a better frame of mind to help your children and meet the daily challenge of being a parent, once your stress level is reduced.

Who Gets Anxiety?

Anxiety, on the other hand, is a feeling of unease. Everybody experiences it when faced with a stressful situation, for example before an exam or an interview, or during a worrying time such as illness. It is normal to feel anxious when facing something difficult or dangerous and mild anxiety can be a positive and useful experience.

However, for many people, anxiety interferes with normal life. Excessive anxiety is often associated with other psychiatric conditions, such as depression. Anxiety is considered abnormal when it is very prolonged or severe, it happens in the absence of a stressful event, or it is interfering with everyday activities such as going to work.

The physical symptoms of anxiety are caused by the brain sending messages to parts of the body to prepare for the "fight or flight" response. The heart, lungs and other parts of the body work faster. The brain also releases stress hormones, including adrenaline. Common indicators of excessive anxiety include:

- Diarrhea
- Dry mouth
- Rapid heartbeat or palpitations
- Insomnia
- Irritability or anger
- Inability to concentrate
- Fear of being "crazy"
- Feeling unreal and not in control of your actions which is called depersonalization

Anxiety can be brought on in many ways. Obviously, the presence of stress in your life can make you have anxious thoughts. Many people who suffer from

anxiety disorders occupy their minds with excessive worry. This can be worry about anything from health matters to job problems to world issues.

Certain drugs, both recreational and medicinal, can also lead to symptoms of anxiety due to either side effects or withdrawal from the drug. Such drugs include caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, cold remedies, and decongestants, bronchodilators for asthma, tricyclic antidepressants, cocaine, amphetamines, diet pills, ADHD medications, and thyroid medications.

A poor diet can also contribute to stress or anxiety -- for example, low levels of vitamin B12. Performance anxiety is related to specific situations, like taking a test or making a presentation in public. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a stress disorder that develops after a traumatic event like war, physical or sexual assault, or a natural disaster.

In very rare cases, a tumor of the adrenal gland (pheochromocytoma) may be the cause of anxiety. This happens because of an overproduction of hormones responsible for the feelings and symptoms of anxiety.

While anxiety may seem a bit scary, what's even scarier is that excessive anxiety and stress can lead to depression. Suffering from depression can be a lifelong struggle as I well know, but the good news is that all of this is manageable!

So, let's take a few little quizzes to see if you are suffering from too much stress, excessive anxiety, or depression.

Solutions On Living A Stress-Free Life



Before you do anything, you have to realize what it is that is causing the stress to occur. Once you figure that out, you can start to deal with the triggers. Pay attention to what happens when the stress occurs. You may be affected by different stressors that affect you physically, emotionally and mentally.

There are many ways that people can learn to combat stress and learn to live stress-free. Here are some tips that people can use to help them reach stress-free status. These solutions are simple and ones that you can do everyday:

Managing Stress

If there are events or situations that constantly trigger your stress, you should try your best to avoid them, if possible. If you can't do that, decrease the amount of time that you involve yourself in that situation in order to decrease the stress.

Focus your energy on positive things in your life. Or try to ignore it altogether if it's something insignificant. The more focus you put on it, the more stressed you'll become.

When you feel stress coming on, learn to control your emotions on how you deal with it. Everyone doesn't need to know what's going on. Besides, it's highly unlikely that they could or are willing to help you anyway.

Learn to control your physical reactions when you're dealing with stress. When some people are under pressure, they look to physically striking out at others or at objects in order to release their stress. You may have to take medicine to keep your anger and actions under control and help to reduce your stress levels.

Uncertainties

When people are dealing with things that they are not sure of, they tend to worry. They start second guessing themselves and questioning whether or not what they did or said was the right decision.

Until they get clarity and understanding, they will feel stressed and tense. They start to wonder what could happen if they made the wrong decision. Let's look at some things that you can do to combat this and have peace within yourself:

You can't overly concern yourself with what will go on in the future. In doing so, you overlook what's going on now, which is important. Think about what's going on now and not stress yourself about the future.

Don't concern yourself about what other people do. That is their decision and their prerogative. You can't change the way they act or what they do. They are the ones to have to live with the decision they make. You can't control others to fit into your lifestyle. Accept their decision and hope for the best for them.

Don't get into a cycle of doubt and unbelief. If you're uncertain about something, then don't engage yourself in it. Make the most of what is going on with you and stay in a positive frame of mind.

Don't add on to your worries and concerns. This will only add to the stress that you're already dealing with. Don't deal with things that you're not sure about and work on keeping your mind at peace.

Exercising

Exercising is an effective way to becoming stress-free. You should exercise at least three to four times a week, starting 20 – 30 minutes a day. This will help you to relax and keep your mind off of things that cause you to stress out. There are exercises you can do to help release your stress and keep it from returning:

Start out with easy exercises such as walking and light aerobics. At first, do it at least three times a week. As your metabolism increases, add more days and increase your exercise time. This is one of the best ways that you can release stress and keep it away.

You can also do yoga, jogging and riding a bike. Or if you're the adventurous type, there is rock climbing and mountain climbing. These exercises can help to relieve your stress. You will feel energized and want to exercise more.

If you're angry most of the time, engaging in boxing or martial arts is a great way to release that anger. Your anger will shift elsewhere and you will feel lighter inside. Your emotions of anger will subside and can bring your peace of mind.

Basketball and football will work to release the stress you're under. When you get involved in either one of these, you won't be tired and you'll be physically fit.

Get an Ab Ball and use it for your abdominal area. This exercise ball can help you work on your muscles and firm up your body.

Any type of exercising that you take part in will help you not only to release the stress, but it will also help you to stay fit.

Eating Right

Did you know that your stress level can be affected by food? Some people don't pay attention to their food control and what they eat. When done correctly, food can help to control your stress level. Let's look at some of the ways that food can affect and help your stress level:

It's important to have a well balanced and healthy diet in order to be stress-free. Eating what you want, including junk food will do nothing for you but help you gain weight. You should try to stick to a time frame where you can eat, especially the three basic meals.

Eat snacks in between. Some good choices are celery and carrots. It's not a good idea to skip a meal, as it can add on to your stress level. The food that you eat should contain plenty of vitamins and nutrients. Breakfast should be one of your heavier meals of the day.

Eat plenty of fruits to help control your stress level. Fruit contains plenty of Vitamin C and antioxidants. Antioxidants fight off radicals. Radicals can contribute to your stress level. Try eating things like apples or oranges to combat your stress level.

If you like nuts or not allergic to them, almonds can help to relieve stress. Almonds have plenty of Vitamin E and help to keep stress from getting to you. You can munch on a few of them as a stress reliever.

Drinking milk can help people relieve stress. Milk has plenty of antioxidants that help to combat stress. Drinking a cup everyday is a good way of effectively relieving your stress levels. You can also have milk when you're eating cereal.

Try eating asparagus to get rid of stress. Asparagus has plenty of antioxidants that can help with that. Another stress reliever is blueberries. These also have plenty of antioxidants. Keep some of these handy so when you feel the stress coming on, you can readily eat them.

If your stress level is high, it's important that you change your diet as soon as possible. The sooner you can do that, the sooner you can effectively deal with getting your stress level down and get rid of stress altogether.

Other Health Issues

Stress has a lot to do with your overall health. Stress and health connect with each other and depending on how it's handled, it can have a positive or negative outcome. In order to be effective and productive, it's important to focus on the things that matter. When you let stress affect you, your focus has been diverted elsewhere.

You will encounter stress in different situations. As long as you don't let it get to you and cause you to neglect your health, then you can continue to be productive. High stress levels can cause a host of health issues. The quicker you work to relieve your stress, the quicker your health will improve.

Make sure that you focus on your health. It's important in order for you to do that if you want to be stress-free. Make sure that you are eating the right foods along with the right amount of food.

If you drink alcohol or indulge in illegal drugs, that will add to your stress level. On the contrary, some people consider it a stress buster, but that is far from the truth. These addictions can affect your health in more ways than one.

Not only will affect your health and stress level, it can also negatively affect those around you. If you sense that you're getting addicted and can't stop on your own, seek help from medical professionals.

If you are the type that gets angered or frustrated easily, it can trigger high stress levels. It can also affect you mentally, as you won't think straight. Consistent anger and frustration can cause high blood pressure and other health issues. You should work to not let things, especially trivial stuff get to you. Things like taking a deep breath

Relaxation Techniques

Doing some relaxation techniques can help to relieve stress and put your mind at ease. A relaxed mode doesn't necessarily require you to move around a lot. Here are some that are simple to implement into your daily schedule:

Soft music can be therapeutic for a stressful mind. Just sitting or laying down listening to it can help you eliminate the pressures and frustration you face on a regular basis. Some nice slow and easy jazz music will do the trick, or some instrumental music is a good way to relieve stress.

In addition to being used as exercise, yoga can also be used as a relaxation technique to relieve stress. Since yoga is not rigorous, it can work to help you be patient and learning to know yourself better. You will feel mentally fit as well as physically fit. You feel balanced and work to focus on the things that you're dealing with.

Meditation is a very good way to deal with stress. In order for it to be effective, you have to concentrate and keep your focus. It may be difficult at first because you're dealing with so much stress, pressure and frustration. Meditation can help you get rid of negative feelings, such as anger. The more you mediate, the quicker the stress can disappear.

Take a nature walk. If there is a trail near you, walk through there in the mornings and just take in the view. Nature walks are so peaceful.

Relaxing your muscles is another way that you can relieve stress. When you're stressed, your muscles will tighten. Concentrate on relaxing them and not being tensed up. One way you can do this is to sit in a quiet place and close your eyes.

Relax your feet muscles and then go upward and relax the rest of the muscles in your body. Take a few deep breaths and focus on what you're doing. Take a deep breath in and a deep breath out. Count each breath as you let it out. This technique should be done for at least ten minutes.

Deep breathing can help you to relax and relieve stress. Take a few deep breaths and as you breathe out, relax yourself.

Get in the habit of smiling. It takes more to frown than it does to smile.

Practice good posture. Take a few deep breaths and sit up very straight. Your feet should be flat on the floor. Put your thighs in an angle toward the floor. The lower part of your back should be arched just a little.

Push your chest bone back and relax your shoulders. Keep staying that way for a few minutes and try not to slouch. Stay upright and maintain your posture.

Get in a quiet place and read a good book.

Give hugs to people every day. Tell them how much you appreciate them. This type of affection will do wonders for you and them.

Prayer changes things. That is the truth. People can learn to pray on a daily basis. Pray for positive things. Pray for things to change in your life for the better. You can't just do it one day and think that things will change overnight. In some cases it takes months.

You have to keep doing it until you see results. Even after that, continue to pray about other things that have caused you stress and frustration. Prayer can take a lot off your shoulders.

You should make time to incorporate some of these into your daily lifestyle. They are very easy to do and it will make your life easier.

Laughter

You should incorporate some humor in your life. What would it be like to go around in a serious state of mind all the time? You've got to laugh sometime. Laughter is good medicine for you and you should prescribe it to yourself as much as possible. This is definitely stress buster material.

Check out some ways that you can laugh and release stress at the same time:

First, you must realize that having laughter in your life can increase your energy and take away any negative vibes that you may be feeling. When you laugh, you release the pent-up anger and frustration that has been bottled up inside you from being stressed. You can find some good comedy shows on television that are really funny.

Think of some situations where the outcome ended up being pretty humorous. You can think on those and get a kick out of them. Let go of the complaining and murmuring.

Go take in a comedy club. Check out the up and coming comedians at local venues in your area.

Smile more often. If you're not used to doing this, then start now. Did you know that smiling can be contagious?

Learn to spread your laughter and joy to others who need it. Not only will it help them, it will also help you.

Control Your Mind

You have to instruct your mind to help relieve the stress. Take control over your mind so that you can be more constructive. Don't allow your mind to have feelings of anger and frustration, which can lead to stressful situations. When you divert your mind away from that, you will be able to focus on other things that don't cause stress.

Control your mind to close it to stress and stressful situations. Learn how to take charge of your emotions that are associated with stress and stressful situations. You have to be able to concentrate on not thinking about things that contribute to stress.

It will take some time, but the more you are able to concentrate on relieving stress with mind control, the better you will be able to deal with stressful situations.

Learn to block negative emotions. If you don't you will allow them to take over and you'll be right back where you started from. Use mediation in order to control your mind.

Seek out positive thoughts to overshadow the negative thoughts and the stress that you're dealing with. You should be able to determine which thoughts are good for you and which ones are not. Don't allow negative thoughts or concerns permeate your mind and make you feel stressed.

Having control over your mind is a powerful thing. It is the connection as to whether or not you can move forward or you sink backward.

Visualization Techniques

The purpose of visualization is to enable you to quickly clear mental stress, tension, and anxious thinking. The visualization can be used when feeling stressed and is particularly useful when your mind is racing with fearful, anxious thinking.

This visualization process, when practiced frequently, is very effective for eliminating deep-seated mental anxieties or intrusive thoughts. To gain maximum benefit, the exercise must be carried out for longer than 10 minutes at a time, as anything shorter will not bring noticeable results.

When you visualize something, you are looking at the big picture. You should look at how you are going to get yourself into a state of happiness. Figure out how you are going to relieve your stress and see it in your mind.

You invoke power when you visualize. When you are dedicated to what you are looking at, you create a picture of what you want to see in your life. If you see yourself stress-free, then you can implement steps to be stress-free.

Visualize yourself in an area where it's quiet and calm. See yourself on an island of paradise enjoying the weather and not thinking about the cares back home. You can think about that and make that come to fruition.

Visualization involves creativity. See yourself doing some things you have never done before.

It is best to do this exercise in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed, and then when you are more practiced you will be able to get the same positive results in a busier environment such as the workplace. You should notice a calming effect on your state of mind along with a sensation of mental release and relaxation.

Either sitting or standing, close your eyes and move your attention to your breath. To become aware of your breathing, place one hand on your upper chest and one on your stomach. Take a breath and let your stomach swell forward as you breathe in and fall back gently as you breathe out. Take the same depth of breath each time and try to get a steady rhythm going.

Your hand on your chest should have little or no movement. Again, try to take the same depth of breath each time you breathe in. This is called Diaphragmatic Breathing.

When you feel comfortable with this technique, try to slow your breathing rate down by instituting a short pause after you have breathed out and before you breathe in again. Initially, it may feel as though you are not getting enough air in, but with regular practice this slower rate will soon start to feel comfortable.

It is often helpful to develop a cycle where you count to three when you breathe in, pause, and then count to three when you breathe out (or 2, or 4—whatever is comfortable for you). This will also help you focus on your breathing without any other thoughts coming into your mind.

If you are aware of other thoughts entering your mind, just let them go and bring your attention back to counting and breathing. Continue doing this for a few minutes. (If you practice this, you will begin to strengthen the Diaphragmatic Muscle, and it will start to work normally—leaving you with a nice relaxed feeling all the time.)

Now move your attention to your feet. Try to really feel your feet. See if you can feel each toe. Picture the base of your feet and visualize roots growing slowly out through your soles and down into the earth. The roots are growing with quickening pace and are reaching deep into the soil of the earth. You are now rooted firmly to the earth and feel stable like a large oak or redwood tree.

Stay with this feeling of grounded safety and security for a few moments. Once you have created a strong feeling or impression of being grounded like a tree, visualize a cloud of bright light forming way above you. A bolt of lightning from the luminous cloud hits the crown of your head, and that ignites a band of bright white light descending slowly from your head all the way down your body, over your legs, and out past your toes.

As the band of light passes over you, feel it clearing your mental state. It is illuminating your mind and clearing any disturbing or stressful thoughts that you may have been thinking about. Repeat this image four or five times until you feel a sense of clearing and release from any anxious thinking.

In finishing, see yourself standing under a large, luminescent waterfall. The water is radiant and bubbling with vitality and life. As you stand under the waterfall, you can feel the water run over every inch of your body, soothing you and instilling within you a sense of deep calm.

Try to taste the water. Open your mouth and let it run into your mouth, refreshing you. Hear it as it bounces off the ground around you. The water is life itself and it is washing away stress and worry from your mind and body. After a moment, open your eyes.

Try to use all of your senses when carrying out the visualization. To make the pictures in your mind as real as possible, use your senses of touch, taste, and hearing. Feel the water trickle down your body; hear the sound it makes as it splashes over you.

The more realistic the imagined scenarios, the more benefit you will gain. Many people report very beneficial and soothing results from using these simple visualizations frequently. The mind is much like a muscle in that, in order to relax, it needs to regularly release what it is holding onto.

You can use any situation or location that will help calm you. We liken this to “finding your happy place”. Maybe you feel relaxed in a swimming pool or on the beach. Imagine yourself there. Just make sure wherever you go in your mind is a place where you can be calm and rested.

By visualizing the different situations, you are allowing your mind to release. It is like sending a message to your brain that when you close your eyes and begin this process it is time for letting go of anything that it has been mentally holding onto, including anxious thinking.

In order to train your mind how to let go of the stress, it is important to practice this daily. With practice, you can learn to release all stress within minutes of starting the exercise. Your daily practice should take place before going to bed, as that will enable you to sleep more soundly.

Many people do not do these visualizations in the bedroom but some other room before going to bed. That way, when they enter the bedroom and close the door,

they are leaving the mental stress and anxious thinking behind them. Just be sure you have the opportunity to totally concentrate on your mental images.

Visualization as a tool for dealing with mental stress is very effective. If such visualization is carried out properly, you can reach a deep feeling of inner calm. This technique probably will not work in helping to end an anxiety attack, but it can help that attack from beginning. It is a very powerful support tool for ridding yourself of general anxiety sensations.

With practice, you find you go days without having anxious thinking interrupt your life, and importantly, this significantly reduces the level of general anxiety you feel.

Visualization is simply a tool you can use to overcome anxious thoughts and feelings. Let's look at various ways that you can combat excessive stress – beginning with motivation techniques.

Motivation Techniques

When you're motivated, you're going to get up and do something. Don't depend on others to motivate you. A lot of times you'll have to do it on your own. If others won't motivate themselves, what make you think that they will want to motivate you?

Stress can be used as a motivator to change your way of thinking and change your way of life. It can prompt you to do things that are the opposite of being stressful. Change your outlook and do things that you've never done before. If there are things that you have done and still do them, try a different way of doing them.

Learn to motivate yourself to make things better in your life. You can't depend on anyone to help you to be motivated. That job is in your hands. Invoke a great spirit while you're doing it. Focus on learning to excel in what you're doing.

Motivating yourself is not an overnight success deal. You have to keep plugging away until you get the desired result. Make sure that you are sincere in what you're doing and don't let any distractions hinder you from your goal of becoming stress-free.

Using Music to Beat Stress

Listening to music does wonder to alleviate stress. Everyone has different tastes in music. We should listen to the music that makes us feel comfortable. Sitting down and forcing yourself to listen to relaxation music that you don't like may create stress, not alleviate it. Music is a significant mood-changer and reliever of stress, working on many levels at once.

The entire human energetic system is extremely influenced by sounds, the physical body and chakra centers respond specifically to certain tones and frequencies. Special consideration should be given to the positive effects of one actually playing or creating music themselves.

Among the first stress-fighting changes that take place when we hear a tune is an increase in deep breathing. The body's production of serotonin also accelerates. Playing music in the background while we are working, seemingly unaware of the music itself, has been found to reduce the stress of the workplace. That's why so many retail places play music while you shop – to take your mind off the high prices!

Music was found to reduce heart rates and to promote higher body temperature - an indication of the onset of relaxation. Combining music with relaxation therapy was more effective than doing relaxation therapy alone.

Many experts suggest that it is the rhythm of the music or the beat that has the calming effect on us although we may not be very conscious about it. They point out that when we were a baby in our mother's womb, we probably were influenced by the heart beat of our mother. We respond to the soothing music at later stages in life, perhaps associating it with the safe, relaxing, protective environment provided by our mother.

Music can be one of the most soothing or nerve wracking experiences available. Choosing what will work for any individual is difficult, most will choose something they 'like' instead of what might be beneficial.

In doing extensive research on what any given piece of music produces in the physiological response system many unexpected things were found. Many of the so-called meditation and relaxation recordings actually produced adverse EEG patterns, just as bad as Hard Rock and Heavy Metal.

The surprising thing was many selections of Celtic, Native American as well as various music containing loud drums or flute were extremely soothing. The most profound finding was any music performed live and even at moderately loud volumes even if it was somewhat discordant had very a beneficial response.

As we mentioned before, there is not a single music that is good for everyone. People have different tastes. It is important that you like the music being played. I recently picked up a rest and relaxation CD at Wal-Mart that has done wonders for me. It has the sounds of the ocean in the background while beautiful piano music plays. It's very soothing.

One note here, it's probably not a good idea to play certain types of ballads or songs that remind you of a sad time in your life when you're trying to de-stress. The reason is obvious. You're trying to relax and wash away the anxious thoughts. The last thing that you need is for a sad song to bring back memories you don't need anyway.

Here are some general guidelines to follow when using music to de-stress. To wash away stress, try taking a 20-minute "sound bath." Put some relaxing music on your stereo, and then lie in a comfortable position on a couch or on the floor near the speakers. For a deeper experience, you can wear headphones to focus your attention and to avoid distraction.

Choose music with a slow rhythm - slower than the natural heart beat which is about 72 beats per minute. Music that has repeating or cyclical pattern is found to be effective in most people.

As the music plays, allow it to wash over you, rinsing off the stress from the day. Focus on your breathing, letting it deepen, slow and become regular. Concentrate on the silence between the notes in the music; this keeps you from analyzing the music and makes relaxation more complete.

If you need stimulation after a day of work, go for a faster music rather than slow calming music. Turn up the volume and DANCE! It doesn't matter if you can actually dance or not. Just move along with the music and do what feels good. You'll be shocked at the release you can feel!

When going gets tough, go for a music you are familiar with - such as a childhood favorite or favorite oldies. Familiarity often breeds calmness.

Take walks with your favorite music playing on the walkman. Inhale and exhale in tune with the music. Let the music takes you. This is a great stress reliever by combining exercise (brisk walk), imagery and music.

Listening to the sounds of nature, such as ocean waves or the calm of a deep forest, can reduce stress. Try taking a 15- to 20-minute walk if you're near the seashore or a quiet patch of woods. If not, you can buy tapes of these sounds in many music stores. This has been very calming for me – you should try it too!

There's another great relaxation technique that I have found in coping with my own anxiety problems: self-hypnosis.

Self-hypnosis For Stress

A few weeks ago, I was feeling particularly overwhelmed with stress and anxiety. It seemed like anything that could go wrong, did go wrong. I felt like I was spinning out of control.

I happened to be writing a book on yoga and meditation at the time and came across a website that offered a downloadable mp3 hypnotic relaxation session. It cost me about \$20 and it was the best \$20 I have ever spent!

There are plenty of places on the internet where you can get these downloadable sessions for a small fee. However, you can also practice self-hypnosis on your own.

You first need to find a quiet place where you can fully relax and listen to your inner voice. You shouldn't TRY to make something happen. Let your mind listen and relax. A large part of achieving that hypnotic state is to allow it to happen naturally.

Also, don't watch for certain signs or signals that you might be in a hypnotic state. We can guarantee that if you look for these signs, you won't be able to fully relax and gain the benefits of self-hypnosis.

There are lots of different ways to experience hypnosis. No two people will have exactly the same experience. In one respect, though, everyone has the same experience: the hypnotic state is always pleasant! There are no "bad trips" in hypnosis. Keep in mind that self-hypnosis is a skill, and that you will continue to get better at it and, as you do, it becomes ever more powerful.

It's a good idea to set up a schedule of practice, allowing yourself anywhere between 10 and 30 minutes, depending on how busy you are and how much time you have to spend at it. Practice during the best part of your day if you can and at a time when you are least likely to be disturbed by others.

Most people find it best to practice lying down, in a comfortable position, with as few distractions as possible. If you are bothered by noise while you practice you can try to mask out the noise with some other source of sound.

You can try stereo music in the background, or white noise if you like. If like most people you don't have a white noise generator, try tuning a radio receiver between stations. The static you get when you do that is similar to white noise. However this takes an older or cheaper FM receiver without a noise suppressor. Sometimes AM tuners can be used for this. This should just be in the background and not too loud to be distracting.

The basic divisions of a hypnotic induction are relaxation, deepening, suggestion application, and termination.

I. Relaxation

Your first job in the hypnotic induction is to slow the juices down and get yourself relaxed. But don't try to force your mind to relax (whatever that means)! If you get yourself physically relaxed, your mind will follow.

Relaxation – really deep relaxation – is an ability that most people have either lost or never developed. Some people can do it quite easily, though. They just let go of their tensions and let every part of their body become limp and relaxed. If you are one of these people, begin your self-hypnosis practice by getting nicely relaxed. Take your time. This is not something you want to rush.

The time involved for the relaxation phase of your self-hypnosis induction can vary from half an hour to just a few seconds. It is an important part of the induction and should not be slighted. As you get better and your skill increases you will recognize deeply relaxed states, and you will be able to achieve them in a surprisingly short time. But as a beginner, take your time. It will be time well spent.

A very popular method of deep relaxation is the Jacobson Progressive Relaxation procedure. This involves tensing each of the major muscle groups of your body (foot and lower leg on each side, upper leg and hip, abdomen, etc.). Tense the muscle group for a few seconds, then let go.

II. Deepening Procedures

Once you have completed the relaxation phase of your self-hypnosis induction procedure, you can begin to deepen the relaxed state. At some time between the deep relaxation and the deepening procedures you will move into a hypnotic state. You probably won't know it, especially as a beginner, but it will happen sooner or later.

One of the first hurdles a beginner must get over is the compulsion to "watch for it." That is, you will keep waiting for hypnosis to happen, for some change in your awareness or the way you feel that will say to you, "You're hypnotized."

Watching for hypnosis will definitely get in your way if you don't get it out of your mind. Going into a hypnotic state is, in this respect, similar to going to sleep. If you try to catch yourself going to sleep – if you try to be aware of the precise instant in which you actually go to sleep – you are much less likely to go to sleep. "Watching" keeps you awake.

In this same way you will not know when you go into a hypnotic state (but that won't be because you lost consciousness – you won't). Later, after you have been practicing regularly for a few weeks or a month or two, you'll be much more familiar with yourself and how it feels to be hypnotized.

Does it take everyone weeks or even months to get into a good hypnotic state? Definitely not. Some people have an amazing experience the very first time they try it. Others might practice for several days, noticing nothing, then out of the blue they have one of those great induction sessions in which they know something stupendously good happened. But if you happen not to be one of these people, don't worry about it. Just keep practicing and you will eventually get there.

One of the most popular deepening procedures is the count-down technique. Hollywood also likes this one. That is why you see it in so many movies. That and the swinging watch.

To use the count-down technique you simply start counting downward from, say, 20 (or 100, or whatever). Adjust the countdown number to whatever feels right to you after you have practiced a few times. Imagine that you are drifting deeper with each count. Other images and thoughts will probably intrude themselves as you count. That is natural. Just gently brush them aside, continuing with your counting.

The speed with which you count down should be natural; not too fast, not too slow. For most people this means counting at a rate of about one count for each two or three seconds. Do it at a rate that feels comfortable and relaxed to you. Some people like to tie the count with their breathing. As they drift deeper their breathing slows down, so their counting also slows down.

Don't count out loud, just think your way down the count. You want to avoid as much physical involvement and movement as possible.

III. Suggestion Application in Self-hypnosis

Once you have reached the end of your deepening procedure you are ready to apply suggestions. What you have done during the relaxation and deepening procedures is increase your suggestibility. That is, you have opened up your subconscious mind at least a little bit to receive your suggestions. This works because of the particular, and peculiar, characteristics of the subconscious part of your mind.

The most common and easiest way to apply suggestions is to have them worked out ahead of time, properly prepared and worded, and memorized. It should not be too difficult to remember them because they should be rather short and you are the one who composed them. If you have them ready and remembered, you can simply think your way through them at this point.

Dialogue, or more properly monologue, is also okay. You just talk ("think" to keep your effort to a minimum) to yourself about what it is you want to do, be, become, whatever.

Don't say "you." You are thinking to yourself, so use the first person personal pronoun "I." Some suggestions can be succinctly stated in a somewhat more formal sort of way, like, "I am eating less and becoming more slender every day."

Elaborated suggestions are generally wordier and more of an ad lib: "Food is becoming less important to me every day and I am filling my time with more important and meaningful pursuits than eating. It is getting easier and easier to pass up desserts and other fattening foods . . ." and so on.

Generally speaking, the most effective kind of suggestion is image suggestion. Image suggestions usually do not use language at all. You can liken this to seeing yourself in a calm, relaxed state while in the middle of a chaotic situation. Actually see yourself in your mind's eye.

Although people sometimes see immediate results from their suggestions, it is more likely to take a little time for them to kick in. So don't be impatient. On the other hand, if you have not begun to see some results within, say, a couple of weeks, you need to change your suggestions.

IV. Termination

Once you have finished applying suggestions you are through with your induction and you can terminate your session. You could just open your eyes, get up and go about your business, but that is not a good idea.

You should formally identify the end of every session. By doing this you provide a clear boundary between the hypnotic state and your ordinary conscious awareness. A clear termination also prevents your self-hypnosis practice session from turning into a nap. If you want to take a nap, take a nap. But don't do it in a way that sleeping becomes associated with self-hypnosis practice.

If you are practicing at bedtime and don't care if you go on to sleep, that is okay. But still draw the line in your mind to indicate the end of your self-hypnosis session.

To terminate the session, think to yourself that you are going to be fully awake and alert after you count up to, say, three.

"One, I'm beginning to come out of it, moving toward a waking state. Two, I'm becoming more alert, getting ready to wake up. Three, I'm completely awake." Something like that.

Self-hypnosis can work wonders when it is practiced on a regular basis. You'd be amazingly surprised at the level of relaxation you can get to. It's one of the best things I ever did for myself!

Be Energized

The more stressed you are, the less energy you have to work with. If you don't have enough energy in your body, you can end up with physical and mental fatigue. If you start to experience this, then you won't be able to do much of anything. Your energy level needs to be high in order to become stress-free and keep the stress away.

Here are some ways that you can be energized and relieve your stress at the same time:

In order for you to get your energy back, eat healthy foods. Don't overeat, or you'll just feel sluggish. Overeating can also cause weight gain, which is another cause of sluggishness.

Get plenty of exercise in order for you to have more energy. Exercising is an outlet that can help you get rid of the stress in your life. When you exercise, the oxygen and blood will flow freely in your body.

Treat yourself to a spa or massage. This will help you to have an increase of energy. Get your muscles relaxed by steaming. A trip to the spa can help you to relieve stress and frustration. You can also try aromatherapy to increase your energy levels.

Make sure that you get enough sleep. Sleep is very important in order for you to have enough energy to get you through the next day. The worst thing you can do is shortchange yourself when it comes to getting a good night's sleep. You should get at least six to eight hours worth.

Drinking water can also provide you with plenty of energy. You can also take vitamins to help you through the day. Vitamins can help you if you start to feel sluggish and need that extra boost.

The more energy you have, the less stress you have to deal with. In fact, you should channel more energy so that you can relieve all of the stress that you're dealing with.

Getting Away From It All

Everyone could use a break from the hustle and bustle of everything. With everything that's going on in our lives, it can take a toll on us if we don't take a breather. You need to take a vacation away from it all, even if it is for a few days. It helps for people to get rejuvenated for the next tasks at hand.

The best way to take a vacation is to get away from your familiar surroundings. Even if the destination is a few hours away, it can help to take your mind off what you've been doing. The relaxation and rest will be good for you. People get so engrossed in their work that it's hard for them to see the forest from the trees.

Go somewhere different than where you usually go for vacation. Look for somewhere that's unfamiliar to you. There are lots of places to choose from. If you've never been on a nature trail, there are many parks that have them.

Nature trails are a good way to get away from it all. They are tranquil places, and you can take your time walking and enjoying the scenery.

Take your family away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Even if it's for a few days, take them somewhere where all of you will have a good time. If weather permitting, take them to a beach.

Smaller children enjoy playing in the sand. Adults enjoy lying in the sun and taking in the warm weather. Just make sure you have your sunscreen.

Take a shopping trip. Find some places away from home that you can go. There are plenty of great shopping malls that will suit your fancy. Just don't overspend and then end up miserable later.

Taking a break and going on vacation is a great way to relieve yourself of stress. Not only will it help you, but it will help your family as well. They will be glad that you took them away from the hustle and bustle.

Managing Your Time

Time management is a big problem for most people to deal with. People have become so busy in their daily lives that they don't realize how important it is to effectively manage their time.

There are some things in our lives that get put on the backburner when they should be included in our schedules. A lot of stress that we deal with comes from not properly managing our time.

People try to cram so many things into one day, knowing in the back of their minds that all of it cannot be done in that limited time period. You have to set aside time to get some rest so you will be refreshed and energized for the next day.

In order to become stress-free it's important that you learn to prioritize and effectively manage your time. There are some things that can be put off for another day or another time. Here are some ways that you can work on becoming stress-free by learning to manage your time wisely:

Make Planning a Habit

Learn to organize your time by having a plan of action. Get a planner or a calendar where you can write down your activities for the week. These activities should be in order by rank of importance. With that, estimate how much time you think it would take you to do each one.

Once you get your activities for the week intact, you can start planning your activities for future weeks. Of course, there is the chance that you may not get to do everything that you set out to do. Interruptions will happen from time to time and you have to adjust accordingly.

Make it a necessity that you prioritize your activities and whatever else you need to do. This can help you to stay focused on what you need to be doing.

When you incorporate time management into your daily routine, it must be organized to where your time is being utilized wisely. There may be some times in your schedule where you have some free time. That too, can be used in ways that are effective and produce results.

Another way to utilize your time is to complete the activities as scheduled. This will relieve the stress of you having to rush and complete them.

Do Not Procrastinate

One thing you don't want to do is to delay completion of your activities or other tasks. Procrastination not only costs you time, it also costs you money. It produces pressure on you to get things done in a shorter amount of time.

Or you may have to delay them for another day or so. Procrastination is not healthy and causes you unnecessary stress. It is very important that you manage your time wisely to avoid this from becoming a habit.

Be Organized

Keeping organization in your home or at work can help you use your time more efficiently. You don't have to spend time needlessly looking for things. When things are organized, it doesn't take long to find it when you need it.

You can bring undue stress on yourself just by not being organized. You end up spending more time looking for what you need than you should. This can definitely rob you of your time.

Set Realistic Goals

Just about everyone has a goal that they would like to see come to fruition. However, they may not all come to life. It may be because you have too much on your plate or you just never guided it to completion.

Then you start to get stressed and frustrated because what you wanted to happen didn't happen for you. Make sure that your goals are sensible and something that you can accomplish.

Embrace Getting Out of Comfort Zone

Getting in a comfort zone can be a bad habit. It can also be a hard one to break, if you're not careful. A lot of times it's fear that keeps us from moving forward. Some people are used to the same routine day in and day out.

They've been doing things the same way for many years and have never been challenged to rise above that. There are times when you have to be self-motivated.

You will not always have someone around you to encourage you and pump you up like you want. It's important that you take that first step to remove the fear and learn how to do things differently.

Once time has elapsed, you cannot get it back. Nowadays, time has become precious commodity and once it's gone, that's it. You will need to set aside time to do things for yourself.

Learn to Relax

Get yourself refreshed and learn to relax. Turn off the computer, phones and everything else that you're used to having in your presence. You can get stressed out by not acknowledging that you need a break.

Don't force yourself to take on more activities and meetings than you can handle. You may have to cut back if you feel yourself taking on additional loads. This can really stress you out. Cutting back may be difficult, but it's the best thing to do on the way to being stress-free.

Your Home

When you're at home, you need a place where you can unwind away from the hustle and bustle of everything. If you have a room in your home that you don't use regularly, then use it as your relaxation room. Design it so that it will look peaceful and appealing to you. Keep soft music in there to play when you go to relax.

You can also put plants and furniture that is pleasing to the atmosphere. Furniture made out of wicker or natural wood would be a good choice. Include some cushions so that you will feel comfortable while you're sitting or laying down. Use natural colors to blend in with the room and the furniture.

Using Herbs To Relieve Stress

Another way you can become stress-free is to use herbal remedies. You usually won't feel any side effects from them. It is a simple way to get rid of your stress, yet one many people don't use. These remedies come from natural herbs that work like medicine. Of course, they should not be a substitute for medicine, but in this case, it can do wonders for your stress.

There are different types of herbal teas that can help to relieve stress, such as:

- Ginger
- Peppermint
- Lemon
- Celery Seeds
- Juniper
- Chamomile
- Ginseng

Herbal teas not only can help to relax you and get rid of stress, but they can also help relieve coughs and the flu. There are certain ingredients in these teas that help rid you of these ailments in addition to being stress-free.

Herbal Remedies

For anxiety, you can use herbs such as Hawthorne berries and the Linden flower. If you are suffering from health problems with your digestive system, Chamomile and Peppermint can help to sooth that area of your body. Ginseng works to keep away colds and other airborne illnesses.

Another herb that can be used for anxiety is ayurveda. It is a medicinal herb that works very well to get rid of stress. This herb also relieves you of being nervous.

If you're not familiar with these herbs, consult your physician prior to taking them.

Other Stress Solutions

Don't get in the habit of arguing with someone else. It does nothing but elevate your stress level and your blood pressure. Plus, you don't know what that other person is thinking. Some people go to violent measures just to settle the score.

If they want to argue, tell them you don't want to and walk away. Some people will go about their business once they see you're not looking for a fight. It's difficult and silly for someone to argue by themselves.

Don't take your frustrations out on someone else just because you are stressed out. Take a walk and get away from the atmosphere that's causing you to be stressed.

Stress Management



As we've said before, stress is a part of life. There's no getting away from it. In fact, some stress is good stress.

You may not believe that, but sometimes stress can motivate us to do things we may not normally do in a relaxed state. Stress can make us brave enough to go forward when normally we might hesitate.

We have to be resilient in order to effectively cope with stress and help it enhance our life instead of control it. How do you get strong and resilient? By learning how to take control of your stress and make it work FOR you instead of AGAINST you.

Recognizing stress symptoms can be a positive influence in that we're compelled to take action – and the sooner the better. It's not always easy to discern why you have the stress in each situation but some of the more common events that trigger those emotions are the death of a loved one, the birth of a child, a job promotion, or a new relationship. We experience stress as we readjust our lives. Your body is asking for your help when you feel these stress symptoms.

We're going to give you many suggestions in this chapter. Not all of them will work for you, but we're willing to bet that some of them will.

Three Approaches to Manage Stress

There are three major approaches to manage stress. The first is the action-oriented approach. In this method, the problems that cause stress are identified and necessary changes are made for a stress free life.

The next approach is emotionally oriented and in it, the person overcomes stress by giving a different color to the experience that caused stress. The situation, which causes stress, is seen humorously or from a different angle.

I especially advocate this approach to stress management. Sometimes if you don't laugh at a situation, you'll cry – uncontrollably. That's no solution. So learn to see the humor instead of the doom.

The third way is acceptance-oriented approach. This approach focuses on surviving the stress caused due to some problem in the past.

Understanding the Stress Trigger

The first stress management tip is to understand the root cause of your stress. No one understands your problem better than you do. A few minutes spend to recognize your true feelings can completely change the situation.

During this process, identify what triggered the stress. If someone close to your heart is nearby share it with the person. If you are overstressed and feel you are going to collapse, take a deep breath and count till ten. This pumps extra oxygen into your system and rejuvenates the entire body.

When under severe stress meditate for a moment and pull out of the current situation for a little while. Stand up from your current position and walk. Stretch yourself. Soon you will find that the stress has lessened.

This is because you have relaxed now and relaxation is the best medicine for stress. Smiling is yet another way of stress management. If you are at the work place, just stand up and smile at your colleague in the far corner. You will see a change in your mood. Learn some simple yoga or mediation techniques.

You can also invent your own stress management tips. The basic idea is to identify the cause of stress and to pull out from it for a moment and then deal with it. Taking a short walk and looking at objects in nature is another stress reliever. Drinking a glass of water or playing small games are simple stress management techniques. The whole idea is change the focus of attention and when you return to the problem, it does not look as monstrous as you felt before.

Five Quick Steps To Relieve Stress

Here are five quick steps you can take toward relieving stress:

Don't just sit there. Move!

According to many psychologists, motion creates emotion. You might notice that when you are idle, it's easier to become depressed. Your heart rate slows down, less oxygen travels to your brain, and you are slumped somewhere in a chair blocking air from reaching your lungs.

I challenge you right now, regardless of how you are feeling, to get up and walk around at a fast tempo. Maybe you might want to go to an empty room and jump up and down a little bit. It may sound silly but the results speak for themselves. Try it now for a few minutes. It works like magic.

Exercise can be a great stress buster. People with anxiety disorders might worry that aerobic exercise could bring on a panic attack. After all, when you exercise, your heart rate goes up, you begin to sweat, and your breathing becomes heavier. Don't panic – it's not an attack! Tell yourself this over and over while you're exercising. Realize that there's a big difference between the physical side of exercise and what happens when you exercise.

Smell the roses

How do you smell the roses? How about investing some money to go on that one trip you've been dreaming about? Visit a country with lots of exotic places to jolt your imagination and spur your creativity. You need to detach from your daily activities and venture a little bit.

Help others cope with their problems

It is very therapeutic when you engross yourself in helping others. You will be surprised how many people's problems are worse than those you may be facing. You can offer others assistance in countless ways. Don't curl up in your bed and let depression and stress take hold of you.

Get out and help somebody. But be careful. Don't get caught up in other people's problems in an attempt to forget about your own.

I am constantly being called by friends and family when they want to vent or get advice. I joke and tell them "Don't call the 'crazy' person for advice!" But there are times that I find myself worrying about the ones who call me and I get caught up in what they're going through. This just gives me more stress than I already have and I find that I have to step away and re-assess myself and my priorities.

I'm now to the point where I can tell them that I just can't deal with it right now and to call back later. Sometimes, they get upset, but more often than not, they understand. But I've learned not to get too upset about their reactions. If it won't matter in a week, it should matter right now.

Laugh a little

By now you've heard that laughter is a good internal medicine. It relieves tension and loosens the muscles. It causes blood to flow to the heart and brain. More importantly, laughter releases a chemical that rids the body of pains.

Every day, researchers discover new benefits of laughter. Let me ask you this question: "Can you use a good dose of belly-shaking laughter every now and then?" Of course you can. What you are waiting for? Go a comedy club or rent some funny movies.

Wear your knees out

If there were one sustainable remedy I could offer you when the going gets tough, it would be prayer. Many people, depending on their faith, might call it meditation. It doesn't matter to me what you call it, as long as you have a place to run to.

There you have a few quick fixes when you're feeling stressed. Want more? No problem!

More Stress Management

Make stress your friend

Acknowledge that stress is good and make stress your friend! Based on the body's natural "fight or flight" response that burst of energy will enhance your performance at the right moment. I've yet to see a top sportsman totally relaxed before a big competition. Use stress wisely to push yourself that little bit harder when it counts most.

Stress is contagious

What we mean by this is that negative people can be a huge stressor. Negativity breeds stress and some people know how to do nothing but complain. Now you can look at this in one of two ways. First, they see you as a positive, upbeat person and hope that you can bring them back "up". If that's not it, then they're just a negative person and can't feel better about themselves unless those around them are negative as well.

Don't get caught up in their downing behavior. Recognize that these kinds of people have their own stress and then limit your contact with them. You can try to play stress doctor and teach them how to better manage their stress, but be aware that this may contribute more to your own stress, so tread lightly.

Copy good stress managers

When people around are losing their head, which keeps calm? What are they doing differently? What is their attitude? What language do they use? Are they trained and experienced?

Figure it out from afar or sit them down for a chat. Learn from the best stress managers and copy what they do.

Use heavy breathing

You can trick your body into relaxing by using heavy breathing. Breathe in slowly for a count of 7 then breathe out for a count of 11. Repeat the 7-11 breathing until your heart rate slows down, your sweaty palms dry off and things start to feel more normal.

Stop stress thought trains

It is possible to tangle yourself up in a stress knot all by yourself. “If this happens, then that might happen and then we’re all up the creek!” Most of these things never happen, so why waste all that energy worrying needlessly?

Give stress thought-trains the red light and stop them in their tracks. Okay so it might go wrong – how likely is that and what can you do to prevent it?

Know your stress hot spots and trigger points

Presentations, interviews, meetings, giving difficult feedback, tight deadlines..... My heart rate is cranking up just writing these down!

Make your own list of stress trigger points or hot spots. Be specific. Is it only presentations to a certain audience that get you worked up? Does one project cause more stress than another? Did you drink too much coffee?

Knowing what causes your stress is powerful information, as you can take action to make it less stressful. Do you need to learn some new skills? Do you need extra resources? Do you need to switch to de-cafeinated coffee?

Eat, drink, sleep and be merry!

Lack of sleep, poor diet and no exercise wreaks havoc on our body and mind. Kind of obvious, but worth mentioning as it’s often ignored as a stress management technique. Listen to your mother and don’t burn the candle at both ends!

Avoid using artificial means to dealing with your stress. That means don't automatically pour a glass of wine when you think you're getting stressed out and don't light up a cigarette. In actuality, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, and drugs can make the problem worse. A better idea is to practice the relaxation techniques we've given you. Then, once you're relaxed, you can have that glass of wine if you want.

Go outside and enjoy Mother Nature

A little sunshine and activity can have amazing ramifications on your stress level and will enhance your entire outlook towards life. Your improved attitude will have a positive effect on everyone in your family and/ or circle of friends; things which seem overwhelming will soon become trivial matters, causing you to wonder what the predicament was.

Not only will you be less stressed, you will be healthier, happier, and more energetic; ready to face whatever obstacles come your way.

Give yourself permission to be a 'kid' again

What did you enjoy when you were a child? Draw; paint; be creative. Play with Play- dough, dance, or read. Play music, allow yourself freedom to express yourself without worry that you're not keeping with the image of who you are 'supposed' to be. Just relax and enjoy yourself. We all have a little child in us and it's a

If I might say so, this suggestion is excellent and very therapeutic. I speak from experience. I can tell you that there is nothing more satisfying than buying a brand new box of 64 Crayons – the one with the sharpener in the box – and coloring away in a coloring book. My grandson loves it when I use this stress buster!

Don't set unrealistic for goals for yourself

Many of us set ourselves up for defeat simply by setting unrealistic goals for ourselves. For example, if you are dieting, realize you cannot lose 40 pounds in one or two months.

Or maybe you are trying to reach a goal of obtaining a particular job position; whatever your goal is allow sufficient time to reach your goals and realize occasional setbacks may occur.

If you reach your goal without any delays, you will be even happier with yourself for arriving quicker than you planned, but don't expect it. In fact don't expect anything; expectations and reality are often two entirely different things.

Learn it is OK to say 'no' occasionally

Often, many of us feel we have to say 'yes' to everyone, every time we are asked for help and feel that we must respond in a positive fashion. But, remember, you cannot be all things to all people. You must first meet your own needs before you can truly give others what they need while at the same time keeping yourself happy.

It's OK not to do everything

You do not have to do everything your family, friends, and others ask. Of course you can help others, but first make sure you have done what is necessary to take care of yourself.

Make time for yourself

Make time for yourself, your number one priority; once your own needs are met you will find you have more time for others. And you may find more pleasure in helping others when you don't feel that you must always put others needs before your own.

We're not done yet! There are so many great ways to combat stress and anxiety. You deserve to get all the information you can. After all, that's really why you're reading this book, isn't it? Here's some more stress busters.

Stress Busters

Yell

I really love this thought and have used it many times myself! Yell! That's right, scream at the top of your lungs – as loud as you can. While this may not be feasible in your home, it works great when you're in your car with the windows rolled up. Let out a guttural yelp from deep down inside. It's liberating!

Sing

As we said in the previous chapter, music can be extremely beneficial when getting rid of stress. Think how much better you can feel when you belt out "Copacabana" at the top of your lungs! Who cares if you can't carry a tune? You're doing this for you!

New Hobby

Take up a new hobby like knitting or crocheting. Don't worry about being good at it. It's the process that's beneficial. Sitting still while performing repetitive movements is calming and stabilizing for many people. It can be time to collect your thoughts.

Start a garden

Even apartment-dwellers can do this. Inside in pots, pots on the patio, pots, a small spot in your yard. There is a little work to setting it up.

Tending plants, fruits, vegetables, flowers and watching them grow, bloom, or yield food is rewarding. Avid gardeners say working a garden is the best way to control stress and worry. An added benefit is the creation of a more beautiful, restful environment.

Play with a dog or cat

Experts say pet owners have longer lives and fewer stress symptoms than non-pet owners. Playing with your pet provides good vibrations – for you and for the pet! It's a form of social interaction with no pressure to meet anyone's expectations!

Look at the stars and the moon

It can be a very humbling experience to lay on a blanket with your hands behind your head and gaze up into the night sky. It's more than humbling; it's downright beautiful and relaxing!

Just the other night, my grandson and I got a blanket out and lay in the yard looking at the moon going behind the clouds and gazing at the stars. He's only three, so it's a fascinating experience for him, but looking at the sky through his eyes made it even more fascinating for me.

I could feel all my worries melting away as we chatted about the astronauts that get to see the stars close up and how big the universe is while we remain so small. When you look at the vastness of the sky, you realize that our problems are small compared to that. I also get great comfort from seeing that one bright star in the sky that is always above my house.

When my best friend's mother died, we got out of the car after coming from her visitation and my friend's five-year old and I stopped to star gaze. She pointed out one particular star and said "That's my grandma. She's our guardian angel now." Every time I see that star, I know Cheryl's there and she'll help get me through anything!

Treat yourself to some comfort food

But be careful or over-eating could become your big stressor. Enjoy in moderation and make yourself feel better.

I love mashed potatoes and gravy and macaroni and cheese. Those are my comfort foods. But I make sure that I don't overdo it. I give myself just enough to bring on that calming feeling.

Swing

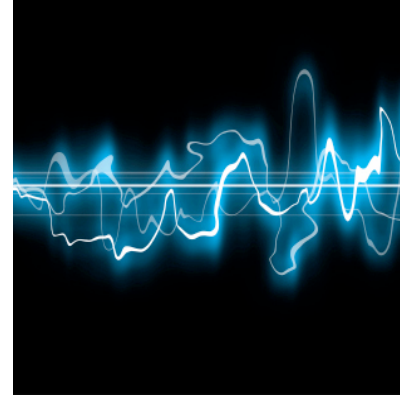
Remember the feeling of sitting inside that little piece of leather on the playground as you sway back and forth and feel the wind whipping through your hair? Do that! If you don't have a swing in your yard, go to a playground and remember to pump your legs back and forth to see how high you can go. It's liberating!

Take a candle lit bubble bath

Even you guys out there can benefit from a warm bath bathed in the soft glow of candlelight. Lay your head back, feel the bubbles and the warm water, and let your stress go right down the drain when you pull the plug!

Phew! There you have twenty-seven ways to relax and de-stress! You can come up with your own ways as well! The key, really, is to find something that makes you feel better when you are overwhelmed and practice that method faithfully. You'll be a healthier person overall.

Managing Stress at the Workplace



We've dedicated one whole section to managing stress at the workplace, simply because it's the place where we spent almost one third of our day at. Expectations from our bosses, clients to even your promotions and appraisals cause stress and we need to know how to handle them.

At the Workplace

Everyone faces some kind of dilemma at the workplace. There are different things that can cause you to be stressed out:

Not meeting a deadline for a project

Constant infighting with co-workers or your boss

Having a tight schedule with hardly a break in between

Dealing with office politics

Being passed over for a promotion

Even with these factors, there are things you can do to get rid of the stress:

Take a different approach about your job and your duties. Don't think of it as a chore. Be enthusiastic about what you do. It may seem redundant, but you have to get the job done.

When you take a different approach to the situation, you won't feel stressed and forced to do something you don't want to do. There is always someone out there who would be glad to fill your shoes.

Don't leave your desk cluttered with papers and other stuff everywhere. Everything should be neat and you should be able to find what you need. This makes it easier for you and you won't be frustrated trying to look for something. This can easily cause you to be stressed because you can't find it.

Being in a toxic work environment can cause you to be stressed out. People not getting along with each other and other people stressing out can cause the work environment to be like this. A lot of times, employees bring their outside problems to the workplace.

When they see you are different about not lashing out at everybody, they'll attack you. Since they are miserable, they want you to be miserable. Maintain your composure even when you want to strike back. Striking back does nothing but add to stress levels.

Be nice and if possible, keep your conversation to a minimum. If they seem to be combative, or argumentative, then walk away. There have been workplace violence incidents that were the result of constant infighting between co-workers and bosses.

Don't get stressed if you don't get the promotion that you thought you deserved. It can be difficult to deal with if you feel this way and you feel you have sacrificed a lot. It can be stressful to deal with rejection of that sort. Continue to work like you have been doing and eventually, the right promotion will come for you.

What you think was meant for you may not have been after all. You may have ended up dealing with a more intense stressful situation than what you were dealing with. So look at the rejection with a grain of salt and a blessing in disguise.

Relaxing at Work

Coffee breaks aren't the only times when you can take a moment for yourself. Experience has actually taught me that coffee (or smoke) breaks can actually add to the stress you feel when you're at work.

Some of the suggestions we've given you in this book can certainly be practiced at work, but, unfortunately, others cannot. Here's a tried and true method to help you relax at work.

How to Relax at Work

First and foremost, find a place to sit. Sit up straight with your back against the back of your chair, your feet flat on the floor, and your hands resting lightly on your thighs.

If possible, close your eyes. You may do the exercise without closing your eyes, but closing your eyes will help you relax a bit more. Do not clench your eyes shut. Let your eyelids fall naturally.

Breathe in slowly through your nose, counting to 5. Hold the breath for a count of 5. Breathe out slowly, counting to five. Repeat.

This exercise is performed by tensing and holding a set of muscles for a count of 5, and then relaxing the set of muscles for a count of 5.

When you tense each muscle set, do it as hard as you can without hurting yourself. When you release the hold, be as relaxed as possible.

Begin by tensing your feet. Do this by pulling your feet off the floor and your toes toward you while keeping your heels on the floor. Hold for a slow count of 5. Release the hold. Let your feet fall gently back. Feel the relaxation. Think about how it feels compared to when you tensed the muscles. Relax for a count of 5.

Next tense your thigh muscles as hard as you can. Hold for a count of 5. Relax the muscles and count to 5.

Tighten your abdominal muscles and hold for a count of 5. Relax the muscles for a count of 5. Be sure you are continuing to sit up straight.

Tense your arm and hand muscles by squeezing your hands into fists as hard as you can. Hold for a count of 5. Relax the muscles completely for a count of 5.

Tighten your upper back by pushing your shoulders back as if you are trying to touch your shoulder blades together. Hold for a count of 5. Relax for a count of 5. Tense your shoulders by raising them toward your ears as if shrugging and holding for a count of 5. Relax for a count of 5.

Tighten your neck first by gently moving your head back (as if looking at the ceiling) and holding for 5. Relax for 5. Then gently drop your head forward and hold for 5. Relax for a count of 5.

Tighten your face muscles. First open your mouth wide and hold for 5. Relax for 5. Then raise your eye brows up high and hold for 5. Relax for 5. Finally clench your eyes tightly shut and hold for 5. Relax (with eyes gently closed) for 5.

Finish the exercise with breathing. Breathe in slowly through your nose, counting to 5. Hold the breath for a count of 5. Breathe out slowly, counting to five. Repeat 4 times. And that's it!

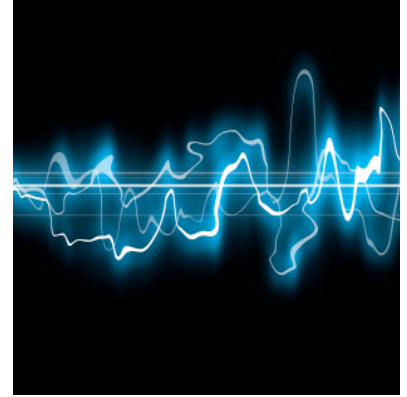
Perform this exercise whenever you need to relax, whether it's on a plane or in a car or anyplace else you may be sitting. Because this exercise may be very relaxing, it should not be performed while driving.

Over time, if performed regularly, this exercise will help you recognize tension in your body. You will be able to relax muscles at any time rather than performing the entire exercise. Perform at least twice a day for long-term results.

You may develop your own longer relaxation exercise by adding more muscle groups. Pinpoint your own areas of tension then tense and relax these areas in the same way.

Maximize the relaxation benefits of this exercise by visualizing a peaceful scene at the end of the exercise. Visualize a scene - a place where you feel relaxed - in detail for at least 5 minutes. Remember the happy place? Go there and enjoy it!

Saying No



One huge problem people who are overly stressed out have is the ability to say “No” when they need to. Maybe your mother wants you to take Grandma to the store, but you’re in the middle of a big work project. Perhaps your best friend asks if you wouldn’t mind babysitting her kids when you’ve already made plans with yourself to get a haircut.

Why It’s Important To Say “No”

There’s no reason why you have to say “Yes” to everyone. In fact, there are often many times when you should turn them down. If you find yourself agreeing to do things when you really don’t want to, you’re a people pleaser. In general, this isn’t a bad trait to have, but it can be a huge stressor.

The Problem with People Pleasers

If you are a people pleaser, you’re going to have to change that title quickly. The more you try to please people, the more they want. The more they want, the more frustrated and stressed out you’ll become.

People pleasers think of other people’s needs before their own. They worry about what other people want, think, or need, and spend a lot of time doing things for others. They rarely do things for themselves, and feel guilty when they do. It’s hard being a people pleaser.

People pleasers hold back from saying what they really think or from asking for what they want if they think someone will be upset with them for it. Yet they often spend time with people who don't consider their needs at all. In fact, people pleasers often feel driven to make insensitive or unhappy people feel better - even at the detriment to themselves.

Constantly trying to please other people is draining and many people pleasers feel anxious, worried, unhappy, and tired a lot of the time. They may not understand why no one does anything for them, when they do so much for others - but they often won't ask for what they need.

People pleasers were most likely raised in homes where their needs and feelings were not valued, respected, or considered important. They were often expected as children to respond to or to take care of other people's needs. Or they may have been silenced, neglected, or otherwise abused, thus learning that their feelings and needs were not important.

In many cultures, girls are raised to be people pleasers - to think of others' needs first, and to neglect their own. Many women have at least some degree of people pleasing in them. Men who identified with their mothers often do as well.

People pleasers' focus is mostly on others and away from themselves. They often feel empty, or don't know how they feel, what they think, or what they want for themselves. But it's possible to change this pattern and to feel better about yourself.

You cannot do all things for all people that want you to do things for them. You cannot be at all places where others want you to be. There are so many things and people who don't mind using you to leech off of your time to do what they want to do.

They could care less about what you have to do and your feelings. Even though it's easier to say yes, for health purposes, it's better to say "no".

It's Not Wrong to Say "No"

Saying no to some requests doesn't brand you as being selfish. Others may think so, but you also have a life outside of them. When you learn to refuse some requests, then you can spend time on things that you need to do.

There may be some things that you have been wanting to do, but couldn't because you kept putting them off, catering to the needs of others. Once they get used to you saying yes all of the time, it gets more difficult for you to say "no". So it's best to start saying "no" early on in the game.

Being a yes person not only can cause you stress and frustration. If you have a family, it can cause them stress and frustration as well. They wouldn't get to see much of you because you would be elsewhere doing things for others.

Sooner or later, your family will get tired of you catering more to other people than to them. The stress and frustration will start to wear and tear on them. The tense atmosphere will increase, and there will probably be things said that people will end up regretting later.

Be polite when you let people know that you can't honor their requests. Some of them will try to make you feel guilty when you start to refuse their requests. You can't do much about that except to blow it off and move on.

It just goes to show that they only wanted to use you when they needed something. Eventually, they will get over it. Even if they don't, it's their problem, not yours.

Work on spending quality time on yourself and with your family. Work to repair any damage or lingering feelings from built-up tension.

How to Say No

First, practice saying NO. This is a very important word! Say it as often as you can, just to hear the word come out of your mouth. Say it out loud when you are alone. Practice phrases with NO in them, such as, "No, I can't do that" or "No, I don't want to go there". Try it for simple things first, and then build your way up to harder situations.

Stop saying YES all the time. Try to pause or take a breath before responding to someone's request. You may want to answer requests with "I need to think about it first, I'll get back to you" or "Let me check my schedule and call you back". Use any phrase that you feel comfortable with that gives you time before you automatically respond with YES.

Take small breaks, even if you feel guilty. You won't always feel guilty, but most likely in the beginning you will. Remember that your mental health is well worth the aggravation you may have to take from others. What's important is you. When you are healthy, those around you will be healthy!

Figure out what gives you pleasure. For example, you may like reading magazines, watching videos, going to a park, or listening to music. Give yourself permission to do those things and then enjoy them.

Ask someone to help you with something. I know this is a hard one but you can do it! After all, everyone else is asking YOU for favors, why shouldn't YOU ask THEM? Just be tolerant if they turn you down. Just because you have always told them "Yes" doesn't mean they always have to tell you "Yes".

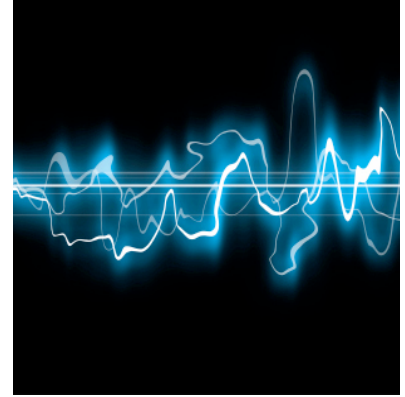
Check in with how you feel and what you are thinking. It's important to be aware of these things; they're part of who you are. And then try saying what you feel and think more often. Just remember to have a little decorum in certain situations.

Many people pleasers believe that nobody will like them if they stop doing things for other people. If someone stops liking you because you don't do what they ask, then you're being used by them and probably don't want them as a friend anyway.

People will like you for who you are and not simply for what you do. You deserve to take time to yourself, to say NO, and to take care of yourself without feeling guilty. It's within your reach to change - one small step at a time!

It's never easy refusing a request, especially when you know you can't fit it into your schedule. However, it's better to be able to have a life and be stress-free.

Conclusion



Dealing with stress is not easy for anyone. However, you cannot allow it to control your life. Otherwise, you will end up with health issues and bruised feelings. Each person deals with stress differently. Some know how to get relief, others don't care to work it out. They would rather be stressed for the rest of their lives.

Stress can be used as a motivator to get rid of your problems as well as stress itself. Using some of these techniques listed in this guide can help you to a better and peaceful life. If you look at it from a positive standpoint, you will be able to tackle it with grace and keep moving. If not, you will continue to allow the stress demons invade your life.

Continue to live a healthy lifestyle by eating right and eating healthy. Also, make sure to incorporate regular exercise in your daily schedule. These two things should be a priority, if nothing else.

Go the other way if you sense negativity going on. If you are in a toxic relationship which has been the same for a while, it's time to let go and move on. Toxic relationships are not healthy for anyone. They can bring more stress on you than you can imagine. You can't allow people to bring you down to their level.

You have to work at becoming stress-free. It won't happen overnight. You cannot allow stress to suffocate you where you can't think straight. You will need to prioritize what's important in your life and stick with keeping those things in order.

There's too much of life to see for you to be burdened with trivial issues that cause you to be stressed and frustrated. Keep yourself sane and happy by keeping the stress away.

Stress is a normal part of life. In small quantities, stress is good -- it can motivate you and help you be more productive. However, too much stress, or a strong response to stress, is harmful.

It can set you up for general poor health as well as specific physical or psychological illnesses like infection, heart disease, or depression. Persistent and unrelenting stress often leads to anxiety and unhealthy behaviors like overeating and abuse of alcohol or drugs.

Just like causes of stress differ from person to person, what relieves stress is not the same for everyone. In general, however, making certain lifestyle changes as well as finding healthy, enjoyable ways to cope with stress helps most people. I hope that I've given you some great ways of dealing with the stress that we all feel!

Above all, remember that you are in no way alone in this battle. There are hundreds of thousands of people out there who feel overwhelmed and nearly completely out of control. That's why we wanted to give you this book. So you can find peace within yourself and realize that we're all on this big blue marble for a reason.

You are too! Enjoy it and live life to its fullest. And when you feel yourself stressed out or beset with a panic attack, relax, breathe through it, and know that there are many, many people who know exactly how you feel.

I like Bobby McFerrin's philosophy best of all – “Don't Worry, Be Happy!”