

10 All-Natural Stress Busters

By Theresa Tamkins

These 10 tips will help you reduce the stress in your life -- no herbal supplements or medications necessary.

1. Religion

Some studies have suggested that people who use "religious coping" -- seeking God's help, finding comfort in religion -- have lower blood pressure than those who use alternate stress relievers. The simple act of praying for stress relief might be enough to achieve your goal.

Rediscover your spiritual self

2. Forgive Someone

A recent study found that those people with a propensity to forgive others tended to have -- you guessed it: lower blood pressure than their less-forgiving peers. Isn't it time you gave up that grudge, if only to gain the health benefits?

3. Sleep

About 60 percent of people who are stressed say they don't get enough sleep, according to a National Consumers League survey. If falling asleep is your trouble, it's time to start a calming bedtime routine. Start with a soothing shower and some lavender body wash. Then slip between the covers with a light novel and you'll be asleep in no time.

4. Vacation

Can't find the time or money to plan a lounge on the beach for a week? A vacation can be as simple as a quick weekend trip, or a special event near home. All that's necessary is that you spend an extended period of time not thinking about those things -- work, money, relationships -- that are making you crazy.

Soothing Habits

5. Yoga

Even one yoga class can cut levels of the stress hormone cortisol -- reason enough to get you down-dogging with the best of them. Taking a yoga class at a local gym is sure to offer you a rejuvenating workout. Or if simple relaxation is what you really need, find a yoga class that specializes in low-key hatha yoga.

6. Bubble Bath

Lock the door, work up a lather, and forget the world exists. Add a few candles -- sage is a soothing scent, or try sandalwood incense -- and maybe a good book or some classical music, and you'll be well on your way to forgetting your horrific commute.

7. Lighten Your Workload

Talk to your boss, delegate tasks, or start looking for a new job. If work is making you crazy, you're not alone. Work is the top source of stress in adults aged 18-54, according to the National Consumers League survey. Forty-six percent say it's a problem.

While you're searching for a less stressful job, find some ways to unwind after work. Sit quietly for 10 minutes before you start your evening. Play a favorite CD while fixing dinner. Or delegate your home chores so you can relax on weeknights instead of slaving over laundry.

8. Cup of Tea

Whether its chamomile or chai, try to take time, relax, and put your feet up when enjoying your favorite brew. In the warmer months you can chill a pot of freshly brewed green tea for a calming and cooling treat.

9. Biofeedback

There are many different types of biofeedback, all aimed at turning you into a warm puddle of relaxed goo. Talk to a health professional about these techniques in which sensors are used to measure your temperature, muscle tension, or heart rate and translate them into lights or sounds. Or for a different sensation, ask your partner to give you a massage, or splurge on an appointment at your local spa.

10. Sex

Is it the snuggling with your honey or the act itself? Either way, sex is a time-tested stress reliever, and it's well worth taking the time to do it.