

The Secret of Dealing with Stress

The secret of dealing with stress is to deal with it. Millions of Americans suffer from stress and related medical conditions. In these challenging times, learning effective ways to deal with the stress of life is vital to good health. The key is to find a method or technique that works for you, that is one, that matches you as an individual and your life style. For example, don't pick a method that takes an hour if you only have five minutes. Also you will need to pick a method that fits in your budget. Cruises to the Bahamas may be extremely relaxing, but they don't fit into everybody's budget. A cruise would also not be a technique that you could do on a weekly or even monthly basis.

There are several things that the average person can do on a frequent basis and cost very little or nothing. One common technique is when you feel stress increase "take five" and do some deep breathing. Sit in a chair with your feet placed slightly apart and flat on the floor. Rest your hands and arms along your side. Make sure your comfortable and take a deep breath in through your nose and feel the warmth of the air rush over your upper lip as it fills your lungs. Gently exhale through your mouth. Repeat this process several times concentrating on just breathing then begin to become more aware of



Stay Healthy

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your body and begin to notice the rise and fall of your arms and hands with each breath. This method only takes a few minutes and can be done in any quiet area you can find and only takes five to seven minutes to take effect. The increased oxygenation associated with deep breathing helps simulate relaxation within your muscles, and in turn, gives you a sense of calm.

Some people find various physical activities stress relieving. Some people report that an activity as simple as walking helps them unwind by giving them some personal time or time with a friend or family member. Others choose more regimented programs such as weight lifting to get their stress out.

Others choose organized activities such as tennis or a pick-up game of basketball. The essential component to making exercise a stress-relieving factor is fun. If you are nervous or look at exercise as a chore then it will simply add to your stress rather than relieve it. One of the reasons that exercise helps relieve stress other than it allows for relief of some physical aggression or stress is that it causes the release of endorphins, which are the happy chemicals in the brain. Here in Minnesota it is also important to whether proof your program. Exercising outdoors can be extremely relaxing, especially on a nice summer or winter day. But here in the great white north, "nice" may not always be the word of choice to describe our weather. Thus, it is important to have an alternative plan if it is too hot, too cold, too dark, too wet, or too slippery. People can change activities with the seasons. Summer bike riders may want to get a stationary bike for winter or switch to lifting weights.

Some people report slowing down and enjoying nature or the world splendors are quite relaxing. The sun may set and rise thousands of times during your lifetime, but how many have you actually watched? How many have you shared with a loved one, your son or daughter, your husband or wife? The complete

awe of these type of spectacles sometimes helps to remind us of more important things than the various things that give us stress.

Some other stress reliving methods are often so simple we over look them on a regular basis. For example the power of a smile. A smile is one of the easiest and most powerful ways to influence your own well being and that of those around you. It's very hard not to smile and feel better even if for a moment when someone smiles. To feel the power of a smile, simply draw a smiley face on a piece of paper a stare at it for ten seconds and you will most likely feel a little better and be smiling yourself. Affection giving and receiving are also very powerful stress relievers. For one week just try to give four extra hugs to people you care about everyday for a week and I guarantee you will feel better at the end of the week. Also anybody with kids or close family will tell you how powerful the words "I love you" can be.

The answer to dealing with stress can vary greatly from person to person, but it clearly does not have to cost a lot of time or money. A small investment in yourself can produce great dividends.

So take time for yourself and realize life is to short, and the sooner you realize this the easier life may become and the less stress you may feel.

Get educated, get health smart, and live longer and happier.