

STRESS-BUSTING TIPS *from* 50 HEALTH EXPERTS

50 Doctors and Health Experts Give Their
Unique Perspectives On Stress Management

Fawne Hansen



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INTRODUCTION

Have ever researched stress management or looked online for stress-relieving techniques? If you have, you'll know that there are many, many different perspectives out there. Ask an MD, a naturopath, a psychiatrist, an endocrinologist, a health coach, and each professional will give you a completely different answer.

The reality is that there is no single 'correct' way to treat or manage stress. Some techniques will work for us as individuals, and others won't. Whether a particular strategy is successful depends largely on the way in which stress affects us on a very personal level.

That's why I decided that a different perspective was needed. Instead of promoting a single way to deal with stress (which may or may not be appropriate for each individual), I thought that I would take a broader approach. Why not gather as many stress management techniques as possible, and let readers pick and choose the ones that might work best for them?

I spent two months contacting and interviewing experts from all areas of health and wellness, asking them for their personal, unique perspectives on stress management. These methods are not only *recommended* by the various contributors in this ebook, but they are actually *used* by those experts themselves.

This ebook contains contributions from 50 experts, including MDs, psychologists, naturopaths, nutritionists, and health coaches. Many of them are public speakers or authors like JJ Virgin, Christa Orecchio, Alan Christianson, and Andrea Nakayama. You might even recognize a few of them from the Dr. Oz show or other public forums.

There is something in here for everyone, no matter what it is that's putting you under stress. I hope you find it useful!

Stay healthy and stress-free :)

Fawne Hansen

Author of The Adrenal Fatigue Solution

AdrenalFatigueSolution.com

WHAT IS ADRENAL FATIGUE SYNDROME?

Are you constantly tired but can't explain why? Do you feel overwhelmed by stressful situations and find yourself lacking in the strength and vitality that you used to enjoy? Do you struggle to get out of bed in the mornings even after a long sleep? If so, there is a good chance that you are suffering from a condition named [Adrenal Fatigue Syndrome](#).

Adrenal Fatigue is a stress-related condition that occurs when your [adrenal glands](#) are functioning below their optimal level. Although you might not have heard of the adrenals, they perform several vital roles in maintaining your health. Most importantly, they control your body's response to stress by releasing hormones like cortisol, DHEA and epinephrine, which are used to regulate your heart rate, immune system, energy storage and more.

When the adrenal glands are overstimulated for a long period of time, they begin to weaken. Typical [causes](#) of Adrenal Fatigue include long term [stress](#) from jobs, relationship problems or even [chronic disease](#). Eventually, the adrenals weaken so much that they are unable to respond adequately when we need them. At this point, many Adrenal Fatigue sufferers report [symptoms](#) like a feeling of constant tiredness, lack of enthusiasm and mild depression. Sleeping long hours does not help - they wake up just as tired as when they went to bed. And they often resort to large [caffeinated drinks](#), sugary sodas or other stimulants to get through the day.

Adrenal fatigue is [not recognized](#) by modern medicine until it becomes life-threatening, when the adrenal glands virtually cease to function in a condition named Addison's disease. But what many doctors (at least the unenlightened ones) fail to realize is that millions of us suffer from *sub-optimal* adrenal performance. Simply put, our adrenals are still doing their job, but just not as well as they should. This might not qualify us for a trip to the ER, but it is certainly a major issue for those of us who suffer from it.

So how can we treat adrenal fatigue? It's not as simple as popping a pill, but it is certainly possible. By making some simple changes to your lifestyle and giving your adrenal glands the time they need to recover, you can get your

energy levels back to the right level. But first, let's take a quick look at what Adrenal Fatigue is and how we can recognize it.

WHAT DOES ADRENAL FATIGUE LOOK LIKE?

Adrenal Fatigue results in a wide range of symptoms, which is why it is often called a syndrome. However, in simple terms Adrenal Fatigue can be defined as:

A group of symptoms that occurs when the adrenal glands and HPA axis function below the optimal level

Each of these symptoms can be connected to a deficiency in one or more of the hormones produced by the adrenal glands.

The most common symptom of Adrenal Fatigue is fatigue, but this is quite different from the regular fatigue that you might be used to. Adrenal Fatigue sufferers experience difficulty getting out of bed each morning, even after a long sleep. There is one exception though - many Adrenal Fatigue sufferers get a boost in their energy levels late in the evening, a phenomenon which is related to their disrupted hormone cycles.

They also report a general lack of enthusiasm, difficulty 'lifting' themselves for important occasions, and an inability to cope with stressful situations. When the adrenals become fatigued, they lose their ability to produce stress hormones - the ones that we use for our 'fight-or-flight' response. That means that many Adrenal Fatigue sufferers report feeling strangely 'flat' when they should be excited. They also struggle to maintain the acute focus and high energy levels that stressful situations often require.

Other symptoms of Adrenal Fatigue include a craving for salty foods, low blood sugar, respiratory complaints, allergies, low sex drive and weight gain. All can be traced back to a sub-optimal level in one of the hormones produced by the adrenal glands. You can read more about the symptoms of Adrenal Fatigue [here](#).

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN OUR ADRENALS ARE FATIGUED?

You might be able to recognize the symptoms of Adrenal Fatigue, but what is actually happening to our bodies when we experience it? Historically, Adrenal Fatigue (or hypoadrenia) was recognized and defined by its symptoms. These days, thanks to modern lab tests and a better understanding of human anatomy, we can pinpoint exactly what happens when a patient is suffering from adrenal insufficiency. This helps health care professionals to diagnose and treat Adrenal Fatigue much more effectively.

Understanding the HPA axis is crucial to understanding Adrenal Fatigue. The adrenals exist as part of a network of three organs, collectively known as the HPA axis, that dictate the levels of hormones in our bodies. These organs are the hypothalamus, the pituitary gland and the adrenal glands.

In a stressful situation, the hypothalamus sends a message to the pituitary gland, which in turn sends a message to the adrenal glands. This prompts the adrenals to release stress hormones like cortisol and epinephrine, which act to increase our blood sugar, raise our heart rate and increase our blood pressure. Within seconds, our body is ready and prepared for whatever is causing us stress. This is known as our 'fight-or-flight' response.

This stress response evolved to protect us from predators and other immediate threats. However it is not designed to react to the constant low-level pressures of modern life, which cause a much longer-term increase in the level of stress hormones.

The adrenal glands can recover quickly from a short burst of stress hormone production. But if the stress continues for a long period of time, they quickly become depleted of the base materials (cholesterol, pregnenolone) that they need. There are coping mechanisms that allow them to manage for a while (e.g. the 'pregnenolone steal', where production of sex hormones is reduced to allow more stress hormone production), but eventually your levels of adrenaline and cortisol have to drop.

You can see how Adrenal Fatigue is a multi-stage process. First we see a rise in our stress hormones to unsustainable levels. After some time, our body reacts by reducing the levels of our sex hormones it produces in order to keep our

stress hormones elevated. And then, eventually, even the stress hormones start to fall as our adrenal glands become unable to cope with the burden that we have given them.

The lower levels of cortisol and adrenaline are what cause many of the symptoms of Adrenal Fatigue. The tiredness, inability to focus, disrupted sleep cycles and more can all be traced back to our levels of these stress hormones. Other symptoms like low sex drive are related to the disruptions in our hormone cascade that result from Adrenal Fatigue. And seemingly unrelated symptoms like frequent urination or cravings for salty foods can be linked to lower levels of aldosterone, another adrenal gland hormone.

Taking these disparate symptoms and piecing them together requires experience and knowledge of the way our endocrine system works. Fortunately, modern lab testing (particularly the cortisol saliva test) offers us a very useful diagnostic tool. However, correctly interpreting the test results is important as the lab reference ranges tend to be extremely wide.

TREATING ADRENAL FATIGUE SYNDROME

There is much more to treating Adrenal Fatigue than simply reducing stress or managing it better. If you have been under chronic stress for a long period of time, the depletion of key neurotransmitters and hormones has probably had a serious impact on your health, whether you realize it or not. These changes cannot simply be reversed overnight.

A comprehensive treatment plan for Adrenal Fatigue involves dietary changes, lifestyle changes, appropriate supplementation, and possibly even hormone replacement for the more severe cases.

If you would like to investigate further, you might want to check out an ebook that I co-wrote with naturopath Dr. Eric Wood. We named it *The Adrenal Fatigue Solution*, and you can find it at <http://adrenalfatiguesolution.com/get-started>. it contains everything you need to know about the causes, symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of Adrenal Fatigue.

STRATEGIES AND TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

The tips and techniques on the following pages are in no particular order. They contain strategies shared during interviews with 50 different MDs, naturopaths, family doctors, pharmacists, personal trainers, health coaches and other health professionals.

Note that this is not intended to be a comprehensive list of stress management techniques. You should view it as a starting point for further research. Read through the various strategies, identify a few that you believe might help, and then take the opportunity to do some further reading. You will also see that I have included a web address for each contributor, just in case you wish to read more about them.

DR. ALAN CHRISTIANSON

Author of Two Books on Thyroid Disease, and a Forthcoming book on Adrenal Function and Weight Loss

<http://www.integrativehealthcare.com>

Each morning I start the day with sunlight. My goal is a minimum of 1/2 hour within 1 hour of waking. This is most useful when done along with some form of brisk exercise.

I like to learn new types of activities and also do ones that offer a continual challenge to balance and coordination. My current favorites are rock climbing and mountain-unicycling.

Next up is a high protein and high fiber

breakfast. Throughout the day, I keep stress in check by spending my time doing things I am good at, I enjoy, and that help others. Sometimes I still find myself getting frazzled. For me the most effective way out of this is to find someone I can connect with and give comfort to.

In the evening, I play games with my family and read technical science fiction or the latest studies in my areas of focus. Each night I make a ritual of finding at least three really cool things that happened that day and think about at least three more that I will make happen tomorrow.



DR. CAROLYN DEAN

Medical Doctor, Naturopathic Doctor, Herbalist, Acupuncturist, Nutritionist, Lecturer, and Author

<http://www.drcarolyndean.com>

To reduce stress my first and foremost recommendation is to take magnesium. But it has to be in the right form and you have to take enough of it. Magnesium is responsible for the activity of 700-800 enzyme systems that make energy, digest food, support the adrenal glands, detoxify heavy metals, relax your muscles and nerves and help you sleep well at night. We don't get enough magnesium in our food so it's important to take supplements.



Because I get the laxative effect with most types of magnesium, I use a liquid form that is 100% absorbed at the cellular level. It's called ReMag and it's picometer in size, which means it's absorbed 100% at the cellular level and doesn't even reach the large intestine to cause diarrhea. The trouble with magnesium therapy is that most people don't get the therapeutic effect before they get the laxative effect.

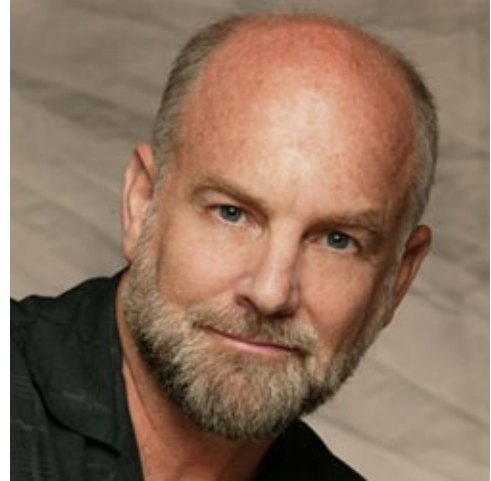
If you want to know how much to take, get a Magnesium RBC blood test. You can order one online at www.requestatest.com for \$49.00. Aim for a optimum level of 6.0-6.5mg/dL in a range of 4.2-6.8mg/dL, which is a measurement of magnesium levels in the general population who are 80% deficient.

REED DAVIS

Founder of the Functional Diagnostic Nutrition® (FDN) Course

<http://functionaldiagnosticonutrition.com>

In my practice, I find myself constantly counseling practitioners and clients on how to identify both EXTERNAL stressors like the demands of work and relationships and INTERNAL stressors such as inflammation, pain, and infections. Together, we use functional lab testing and a holistic grounding program to eliminate stressors and identify healing opportunities that support the body in building health.



Personally, I try to live my life as stress free as possible, which is not always easy with the growth of FDN, speaking engagements, new projects, and consulting work. **To counter stress, I eat a nutrient dense diet, get proper rest and regular exercise.** Additionally, I incorporate the following principals to keep myself grounded.

1. **A Clear Sense of Purpose.** By clarifying what is most important, I can focus on one or two key things and focus less and delegate the less important, eliminating stress.
2. **Connect with Nature.** Stepping outside and breathing in fresh air, walking barefoot on grass, and feeling the warmth of the sun on my skin energizes me and provides a valuable sense of inner peace.
3. **Relinquish Control.** By surrounding myself with a team of talented individuals, colleagues, and friends with whom I can share challenges and burdens as well as joys and successes, creating a sense of community and shared responsibility.
4. **Laugh.** The act of laughter instantly relieves stress. Finding humor in my life and not taking myself too seriously has always been in my stress reduction arsenal. I have also found humor to be a great tool to break the ice and put those around me at ease in an otherwise stressful situation.

DR. KELLY AUSTIN, ND

Naturopathic Doctor, Clinic Director, CEO

<http://atmyprime.com>

There is light at the end of the stress tunnel! At my clinic, we cope with stress using nutrition and supplementation.

A proper vitamin B12 and vitamin B5 injection combo can really help with improving energy levels, mood, focus, memory, and adrenal health as well as relieving stress & anxiety, nerve pain, and burnout symptoms.



Internal physical stress can also be caused by improper food choices. Take a moment to see how your body reacts to common allergens like gluten, nuts, dairy, eggs, corn, and soy. Fill up on high quality nutritious proteins, organic fresh green vegetables, and delicious satiating fats.

Finally, taking 500-1,000mg of GABA supplementation with a physician's recommendation and monitoring may significantly improve relaxation. Breathe deeply, eat well, and relax!

WENDY MYERS

Founder and Head Writer of [liveto110.com](http://www.liveto110.com), Certified Holistic Health and Nutrition Coach

<http://www.liveto110.com>

Stress activates the sympathetic nervous system – the fight or flight part of your nervous system. To combat stress, you must activate your parasympathetic nervous system. You must activate this part of your nervous system to detox.

One of the best ways to access or activate this part of your nervous system is with a near infrared sauna.

A near infrared sauna is comprised of 3-6 red infrared bulbs in an enclosure. This is one of the best methods to activate the parasympathetic nervous system, de-stress, calm the mind and sweat out dozens of heavy metals and hundreds of chemicals. You can't do anything healthier for your body! I sit in my sauna for an hour at least 5 days a week!



JEN WITTMAN

Holistic Health Expert, Thyroid Specialist and Vitality Coach

<http://thehealthyplate.org>

Oh stress relief! I must do something at least once a day to keep my body focused, centered and energized. **But the biggest thing I do for myself is take 4 hours, once a week to reconnect with me.** I take my trusty journal and a bunch of magazines like The Intelligent Optimist, Mindful, Yoga Journal to a sacred space in nature.



First, I write out all my “crazy” in the journal. I just let loose! Anything that comes to mind gets written out and released in my journal. I always say to myself, “I’ll just write for 5 minutes.” What starts as a quick and simple 5-minute writing exercise invariably ends up whisking me away from the world and connecting back to myself for about 40 minutes. I let the pencil guide my journey and stop when it tells me the writing is done.

After that, I take several deep breaths. I connect to my heart and make sure everything that has been stored up for the week is offered up and released. I spend time being grateful. I take in my natural surroundings and say thanks for this moment and all living things on earth.

The finale to this delicious time alone? I dive deep into those magazines and lose myself to new ideas, beautiful and touching stories and the inspiration of our oneness. **Spending these 4 hours with myself every week is like pushing a giant reset button.** It’s a touchstone for self-care and having something to look forward to each week is stress relief itself!

DR. DAVID JOCKERS

*Maximized Living Doctor, Corrective Care Chiropractor,
Nutritionist, Exercise Physiologist*

<https://www.drjockers.com>

I advise my clients on the following lifestyle strategies to rejuvenate their minds, rest their adrenals and strengthen their spirits.

Get Out in Nature: Go to the beach, a mountainous environment or even a local park. Get out and spend time connecting with nature and breathing in fresh, clean air. You can go for a light hike, do a bit of swimming or take a walk but mostly just focus on relaxing and breathing. Ideally, you are in an environment where you can take your shoes off and ground your barefeet to the grass, dirt or sand. This will help you absorb the natural healing frequencies of the Earth.



Do Something Creative: What is your creative obsession? Do you like to read on a particular subject, do you like to write, do you like to listen or play music, do you do art, photography, etc. Have a creative outlet that inspires and captivates your heart.

Relaxation: Dry brushing your skin with a soft bristled brush (even better when you and your spouse/partner are doing this together - very sensual) is an amazing way to stimulate your lymphatics and improve circulation. Epsom salt baths with a variety of essential oils are also a nice way to relax, improve your detoxification systems and provide stress-busting magnesium and sulfates for the body. The essential oils have fantastic health benefits and aromatherapy is a fantastic way to improve the health of the pituitary gland, which is the master control gland of the bodies stress-response.

Nutrition: Focus on good fats, anti-oxidants and clean proteins. Good fats include coconut products, avocados, grass-fed butter/ghee, pasture-raised eggs and extra-virgin olive oil. Anti-oxidants include berries, citrus fruits, non-

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starchy veggies and herbs. Clean protein includes organic and pasture-raised animal products and wild-caught fish.

Supplements: Stabilize blood sugar with green coffee bean extract, chromium and carnitine. Adaptogenic herbs such as Ashwaghandha, Rhodiola and Holy Basil are especially helpful as well.

CARA FAUS

Blogs About Incorporating Traditional Food, Natural Remedies, And Healthy Habits Into Real Life

<http://www.healthhomehappy.com>

My favorite way to cope with stress is to run and listen to podcasts. The burn and exhaustion that comes from pushing your body to do things that normally you don't do, along with tuning out the world while listening to a podcast that you enjoy creates a mini vacation, even if the kids are along riding their bikes or being pushed in the stroller.

Nutritionally, keeping a clean, grain-free diet allows me to have more energy and physically cope with stress better. And lastly, my nerd side can eliminate mental stress by creating lists and spreadsheets. Knowing what exactly needs to be done, and where exactly my money is going helps me to stop worrying and focus on accomplishments.



DR. HYL A CASS

Board-Certified In Psychiatry And Neurology, As Well As In Integrative And Holistic Medicine

<http://www.drcass.com>

Before rushing to take antidepressant and anti-anxiety prescriptions, with their side effects including possible addiction, try one of the many safe, effective natural remedies. Techniques such as meditation can also be extremely effective. Here are some helpful tips to stress-proof yourself:



- Nutrients like the herbs (hops, passion flower) and amino acids (theanine, glycine, taurine) that help calm you down by acting on the GABA system in the brain.
- Adaptogenic herbs that support the adrenal glands while enhancing energy, improving mood and promoting inner balance.
- Be careful not to over-indulge in such habits as alcohol, drugs, or overeating.
- Eat healthy, regular meals to avoid rapid fluctuations in your blood sugar levels. Stress uses up many of the nutrients that we need to be fully functional emotionally and physically. These nutrients should be included in the diet and even taken as supplements. You can cover all bases by taking a high potency multi-vitamin and mineral combination, that includes Vitamin B complex, vitamin C magnesium, potassium, zinc, chromium, and manganese. Essential fatty acids in the form of fish, fish oil, and flax oil are also important buffers against stress.
- Deep relaxed breathing is an excellent anxiety and stress reducer, and overall tension reliever.
- Make sure to get enough sleep, since sleep deprivation alone can make all these responses much worse.

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- Monitor your moods and feelings. If you're feeling down or worried, spend time with your friends and family rather than being alone.
- Helping others is a great remedy for anxiety and depression. Don't forget hugs – natural, safe, free, and mutually beneficial!

DR. FRANK LIPMAN

Integrative Doctor, Author, Be Well Cleanse Advocate

<http://www.bewellbydrfranklipman.com>

Adaptogens are a unique group of herbal ingredients used to improve the health of your adrenal system, the system that's in charge of managing your body's hormonal response to stress. They help strengthen the body's response to stress and enhance its ability to cope with anxiety and fight fatigue – slowly and gently, without jolts or crashes. They're called adaptogens because of their unique ability to “adapt” their function according to your body's specific needs. Though the effects may initially be subtle and take time to make themselves felt, they're real and undeniable.



I prefer combination adaptogenic herb formulas and the adaptogen herbs I consider most important include Asian Ginseng, Eleuthero, Ashwaghandha and Rhodiola Rosea. Depending on your needs and physical condition – consult your doctor before taking any herbs – you can take these adaptogens individually or in a combination formula like my Be Well Adaptogens. When buying a formula, look for one that has at least 3 of the above adaptogens and make sure it has some Rhodiola in it. Again, remember to consult your doctor first to get the all clear before you start.

JEN SINKLER

Co-Owner and Strength Coach at The Movement Minneapolis

<http://www.jensinkler.com>

As a writer, trainer, and presenter who travels (and loves to!) quite often, there are definitely opportunities for stress to creep into my life. My stress triggers are when work is stretching my play time too thin, I'm not getting enough sleep, and I'm feeling a bit. . .fluffy. These are all major clues for me that I need to check back in to my body and line my ducks back in a row, the ducks being relaxation time, adequate sleep, and a proper diet.



Scheduling “play dates” with friends:

workouts, walks, and yoga sessions always helps me unwind; my body is in at most relaxed and natural state when it’s moving. I bought amber colored glasses (from Gunnars) that I wear nightly to combat the blue/green light being emitted from my computer screen, a culprit that was interfering with a good night’s sleep and, for the fluffy time, I use a free app for iPhones (Fitocracy Macros) to help reacquaint me with proper portions sizes and adequate protein consumption.

CAROLYN SCOTT-HAMILTON

Nutritionist, Chef, Author, Media Personality/TV Host, Speaker

<http://HealthyVoyager.com>

We all battle with our own versions of stress. From our jobs to our families to travel to traffic, stress creeps in from every angle. I am no stranger to stress but over my years of studying holistic nutrition and promoting healthy living with my clients and readers, I would say the following are my little gems that help keep the stress monster at bay!



Eat clean. The more pure and natural your food, the less likely you will feel the physical and mental effects of stress. Steer clear of excessive caffeine, stimulants, sugar, salt and chemical-filled foods, as all these wreak havoc on our bodies as well as on our mood.

Get rest. We all have busy lives but sleep is key to beating stress. Stick to a bedtime that will allow at least 7 hours of sleep and leave all internet devices in another room so you are not distracted from your time to relax.

Meditate. If even for 5 minutes, take time to sit quietly, alone with your thoughts. Learn to unplug.

Move. Exercise boosts endorphins, which boost your mood and helps to combat stress.

Find meaning in your relationships. Having a good support system and love in your life really gives you perspective on what is important and what is not worth stressing over.

ANDREA NAKAYAMA

Founder of Replenish PDX, Celebrated Functional Nutritionist, Speaker And Educator

<http://www.replenishpdx.com>

In my practice I talk to a lot of clients about their adrenal health. It's a cornerstone of hormone balance and not only affected by the stressors of everyday modern living, but also by the challenges of chronic health concerns. I also teach about the adrenal glands to professionals in my Holistic Nutrition Lab, and to customers in our Winter Cleanse (winter is the season to focus on the kidneys and adrenals), so I get to say the word "adrenal" quite a lot!



One thing I do to support my own adrenal health while reminding others to do the same is to give my adrenal glands a little loving. Each time I say the word "adrenal", I form my hands into fists and rub the area on my back where my adrenals are located. You can do the same! Locate your kidneys just above your waist on the back side of your body. The adrenal glands sit right on top of them, like little caps.

In fact a loving self-massage with some supportive essential oils is an easy Action Step to support your adrenal health. You can use oils that promote relaxation and simultaneously strengthen your system that may have been taxed for quite some time. Here's one favorite mix I like to use, both personally and professionally:

- 20 oz carrier oil +
- 20 drops black spruce (for adrenal and immune health)
- 10 drops pine (also for adrenals and immunity)
- 10 drops geranium (for your adrenals and mental clarity)
- 10 drop bergamot (a natural anti-depressant and an appetite regulator)

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You may not say the word “adrenal” as much as I do, but you can make this adrenal loving practice a daily routine.

DR. ANDREA MAXIM, ND

Naturopathic Doctor, Speaker, And Author Of 'MAXIMized Health'

<http://www.themaximmovement.com>

The best piece of advice I received from a seminar I listened to on Stress was this:

"If you're not going to stress out about this 1 year from now, do not bother about stressing out about it now"

That means if you're stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic, don't sweat it! If a deadline is looming, you will always get your tasks accomplished so do not start doubting yourself now. Stress is just a mental game and it does not need to win every time.



If you're having difficulties dealing with stress or stressful situations, I always gravitate towards herbs: Black Current Bud, St. John's Wort, Oatstraw or Skullcap. These help you keep your cool when you feel like you're entering hot water. Other remedies can offer you instant relief when the anxiety starts mounting like Rescue Remedy drops or Pasceflair tablets.

If these suggestions are unattainable and you need relief now, start with one deep belly breath. You can literally change your hormones with one deep breath. Try it now! Put your hand on your belly and take a deep breath in through the nose (count of 3) and out through the mouth (count of 3). If that hand doesn't rise and fall, you are not deep belly breathing. You must fill those lungs with air completely to change your stress response.

DR. SUE JOHNSON

Founder of Emotionally Focused Therapy, Author, Psychologist, Researcher, Professor, Speaker

<http://www.dr.suejohnson.com>

The evidence is clear – we can meditate, we can exercise, we can try to interrupt negative thoughts, but the very best way to deal with stress and uncertainty is to turn to someone you trust, especially a partner who is close and safe, and share your anxiety.

We may think that this strategy is somehow less adult or functional, but in fact, for our highly social mammalian brain, the touch and comfort of a loved one is an extremely powerful safety cue and calms our nervous system in an optimal and efficient way. This is the most ancient and most obvious strategy for dealing with stress, but in our modern world we seem to have decided that it is simply a sign of weakness. Not so.

When we share, we order our emotions, find words that make sense of our fears, reach for the support of another and receive the comfort that can turn off fear and pain. New evidence shows that simply holding a loved one's hand can turn off the brain's alarm response and reduces the pain of electric shock.



RAE INDIGO

Yoga Teacher, Blogger

<http://www.raeindigoyoga.com>

My philosophy is, rather than cope with stress, to use preventative measures to keep it from arising in the first place. I start by distinguishing between good stress and bad stress.

As we all know, a certain amount of stress is necessary to keep us motivated, otherwise we would tend to become lethargic and sedentary. When we observe nature it's easy to see that there is no evolution without a certain amount of stress, but if that stress becomes prolonged (chronic), then suffering ensues and health issues are likely to follow. Coping with stress means that we have reached that point where our overall wellness is compromised and then something must be done or the condition becomes progressive.



The following is a short list of some of the things I do to stop stress in its tracks when it becomes excessive or chronic.

Breathe. When I feel as if my pot is about to boil over, I breathe, slowly, deeply and most of all mindfully. It's amazing how just a minute or two of conscious breathing can bring about a state of calm.

Eat well. The more plant-based foods the better. They also keep your system alkaline. Meats and other heavy protein foods, refined sugars, trans fats, fast foods and processed foods all set up an acid condition in the body, and an acid system produces inflammation, and inflammation causes stress.

Exercise. I do yoga, but anything that gets your body moving is good; take a brisk walk for 20 minutes every day, go to the gym, ride a bike, take up swimming, Tai Chi, Aerobics, Pilates, resistance/strength training, the list is endless, but do something that raises your heart rate just to the point where you're about to break a sweat.

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Rest. A good night's sleep is always a stress buster. You'll wake up to a brand new day and a new perspective after a good night's rest. If the first three tips on this list are followed, it is pretty well assured that you'll sleep soundly.

BERNIE CLARK

Yoga Teacher, Creator of [YinYoga.com](http://www.yinyoga.com)

<http://www.yinyoga.com>

Stress is unavoidable in our culture, and some amount of stress is actually needed for our bodies to be strong and healthy. All exercise includes the dual components of stress and rest. However, when we experience too much stress and not enough rest, problems arise. In physiological terms we are hyperactive in our Sympathetic Nervous System (which controls the 'fight-or-flight' response) and hypoactive in our Parasympathetic Nervous System (which controls the 'rest-&-digest' response).



The key activity that turns off the fight-or-flight system and activates the rest-&-digest system is breathing. Not just any old breath, but a proper yogic breath. A slow, deep, even breath will create a relaxed nervous system, yielding a calm mind, which in turn will help the breath become slower and more even. A positive feedback loop can be established that increases the effectiveness of the PNS and increases GABA production.

There are many forms of breathwork in yoga (called pranayamas). Some are very active and stimulating, and there are times when these pranayamas are beneficial, but to turn on the PNS, we need the slow, deep pranayama known as ujjayi. Ujjayi means "victorious breath". A nice modern term for this kind of breathing is "ocean breathing."

ED AND DEB SHAPIRO

Authors, Bloggers on Oprah.com & Huffingtonpost.com, Meditation Experts, Corporate Coaches

<http://www.edanddebshapiro.com>

When situations or emotions are running high it's easy to say, "Just let go." But once something has been picked up and reacted to then it's already affecting us, so letting go doesn't always work.

Once, we were disagreeing and getting heated with each other, when a wise friend said, "Can't you just laugh?" It reminded us that the ego loves to be right, easily over-reacts, and clings to itself. So instead of letting go we prefer, "Don't even pick it up." This allows us to stay mindful, objective, and for the ego to lose its grasp. It also enables us to not take ourselves too seriously and to remain good friends. Our guru is Lord Teflon, as nothing sticks to Teflon!



KERRY BELVISO

Kinesiologist And Creator Of The www.healmyadrenalfatigue.com E-course

<http://kerrybelviso.com>

When you're going through a stressful time, the thoughts you have can make you feel even more tired, overwhelmed and disempowered.

The first step is to observe the thoughts you're experiencing. We can easily see that thoughts like, "I can't believe this is happening," "This isn't fair," "I should be handling this better," "I can't handle this," "This kind of thing always happens to me," or "I'm not good enough," will make us feel more depleted and less resourceful. If you notice thoughts like these creeping in, there is no need to judge yourself. Judging and criticizing yourself for your negative thoughts only contributes to the problem!



Instead, try this. Firstly, give yourself some compassion. If you're feeling stressed and overwhelmed, there is probably a good reason. Think about how you would speak to a good friend or close family member who was in your situation. A simple, "I am so sorry you're going through this, what can I do to support you?" can make such a difference. Try using these words or similar to yourself. You don't need to use positive self-talk that feels false or untrue, but try statements like, "You're doing really well, given the circumstances," "What's the next step I can take?", "My best is good enough." Supporting yourself and being kind and loving towards yourself during stressful times can make a huge difference.

RUTH A. BAER, PHD

Professor of Psychology, Author of The Practicing Happiness Workbook

<http://www.ruthbaer.com>

A surprisingly helpful way to cope with stress is to look right at it with mindful awareness. This sounds counter-intuitive because we're usually trying to escape from stress. We push it away with food, alcohol, shopping, TV, the internet, work, or other distractions. But we handle stress much better when we're mindfully aware. We see more clearly what's really happening. This provides time to make wise decisions about what to do.



The next time you're feeling stressed, take a few moments to slow down and observe. Notice your body sensations: racing heart, churning stomach, sweaty palms, tense muscles. Observe the thoughts and emotions that are swirling around, as if they were leaves blown about by the wind on an autumn day. As best you can, let go of judgments and criticisms and allow your thoughts and feelings to be as they are. They're understandable, given the stressful circumstances.

Observe a few breaths and adopt an attitude of kindness toward yourself. Open your mind to the options for what to do next. You may be surprised at the wisdom that emerges from within when you're mindful in the face of stress.

KELLY BROGAN, MD

Holistic Women's Health Psychiatrist

<http://kellybroganmd.com>

Here's what to do when you feel stressed:

1. Notice and acknowledge your discomfort.
2. Relax and release it no matter how urgent it feels. Let the energy pass through you before you attempt to fix anything.
3. Imagine sitting back up on a high seat, in the back of your head watching your thoughts, emotions, and behavior with a detached compassion.
4. Then ground yourself. Connect to the present moment - feel the earth under your feet, smell the air, imagine roots growing into the earth from your spine.



Do this in a spirit of non-judgment because this isn't an exercise done for mastery; it's a decision that you make every time you feel disturbed inside.

Integrating these practices or routines into your life may do more than support longevity and optimal health. It may reverse chronic disease, eliminate the need for medications, and most importantly confer a greater sense of life satisfaction, happiness, and freedom to be here, in the present, where the wonder of this never-before-existent moment is unfolding before you.

GEMMA BOYD

Qualified Holistic Counsellor And Meditation Guide

<http://www.sironawellness.com.au>

When we're stressed, we go into a fight-or-flight response which has all sorts of detrimental side effects, especially when we're in this mode for a prolonged period. One of the things we do when stressed is hold our breath or breathe more rapidly and take more shallow breaths. We're permanently hyperventilating which can lead to side effects like depression, insomnia, muscle fatigue and trouble recovering from exercise or trauma.



Any time I'm faced with a stressful or confronting situation, I take just a moment for some 4-7-8 breathing. I simply take a deep breath in for four seconds, hold it for seven seconds, then exhale fully for eight seconds.

By breathing out for twice as long as you breathe in, you're performing full diaphragmatic breathing. You're getting your breathing back to normal, interrupting the stress response and restoring your body to its natural, relaxed state. This breathing exercise is a great circuit breaker in stressful situations to enable you to respond in a more calm and constructive manner. It's also great exercise to do before getting out of bed in the morning to start the day in a fresh, healthy and positive way.

EMILY HALL

Wellness Practitioner And Body Intuitive

<http://www.yourintuitivebody.com>

Working with The Elements is a simple, yet profound, gateway to achieve stress reduction. Our needs change constantly and it becomes a beautiful process to discover which Element, or combination of Elements, can provide stress relief.

Here are some examples of working with The Elements to incorporate into your life:

Earth ~ Find a special stone in the yard, garden or favorite walking path to carry in a pocket or place on the desk at work. Hold a piece of driftwood in hand, feel the body shift awareness as it connects with the wood. ~ I feel grounded.

Water ~ Be conscious with gratitude while showering/bathing to release stressors. During a work day; find a sink, allow water peacefully to run over hands and arms. ~ I release stress.

Air ~ Pay attention to breath for a handful of cycles, and adjust to a calming rhythm. Open a window or turn on a fan and let wind blow over your face and hair. ~ I allow change and transition.

Fire ~ Purposeful and safe use of fire with candles in the home or office. Occasionally turn off the lights and sit with a candle or outside with fire grate. ~ I release stress with purpose and centeredness.

Metal ~ When working with Metal as an Element it benefits us to choose which Metals we have around. For example, wearing copper or gold jewelry, or cooking with cast iron. ~ I choose.



STEPHANIE GREUNKE, MS, RD

Runs a private practice focusing on women's health

<http://rockyourhormones.com>

Whenever I feel stress starting to pile up, it's a good reminder for me to check in with my personal core values and desired feelings.

I reflect on how I want to FEEL at the end of the day. It's important for me to feel abundance, vibrant, love(d), nourished, and free. If I am presented with a task that at the end of the day won't provide me with one of those outcomes, I pass. If I absolutely can't pass on the task, I find a way to make it fit my desired feelings. For example, I can't always

pass on doing the dishes, but if I blast some of my favorite music in the background while I'm doing them, I can connect with my need for feeling vibrant and free!

In the past, I've had a really hard time saying no to opportunities and was fearful that I was missing out on something. Now, it's much easier for me to say no, since not all opportunities will lead to those desired feelings. **Figuring out how you want to feel and making choices based on those feelings is the key to designing a life with less stress.**



DR. MARK STARR

MD Specializing in Integrative Medicine, Pain, Hormones, and the Rehabilitation of Sports Injuries

<http://www.21centurymed.com>

More than half of our population in America suffers from hypothyroidism. Dr. Broda Barnes' longterm study, Thierry Hertoghe's study, as well as my own clinical experience indicates that the average adult dosage to resolve hypothyroidism is 3 to 3½ grains of desiccated thyroid.

The equivalent dosages for those with severe allergies and/or Hashimoto's Disease are T4-114mcg/T3-27mcg for 3 grains, and 3½ grains equals T4-133/T3-31.5mcg.

A large majority of my patients require adrenal supplements in order to tolerate the dosages of thyroid that are required to restore their health. By balancing the thyroid and adrenal support, patients are much less susceptible to stressors in general. All the details are included in my first book, Hypothyroidism Type 2: The Epidemic.



JACOB TEITELBAUM, MD

Author, Researcher, And Director Of The Practitioners Alliance Network

<http://www.endfatigue.com>

Here's a *magical* Tai Chi move to eliminate adrenal stress.

In decades gone by, the advertising executives mantra was "Sex Sells!". For the last several decades, however, it has changed to "Fear Sells!". This results in the "24 hour news networks" battling to find the "crisis of the day". Meanwhile, most of what they report is not really news, but rather fictions. Don't believe it? Then watch the same event being reported on by the 5+ major news networks and you'll think they were reporting on different planets! So you are not going to get informed watching – you're just going to exhaust your adrenals.



So, here is a great Tai Chi move to heal your adrenals. When watching TV, as long as what you are watching feels good, enjoy yourself. When it starts feeling bad:

1. Sit up straight
2. Pause, calm and center
3. Inhale through your nose
4. Reach your arm far over to the side
5. Pick up the remote and click "Off"!

Your adrenals will thank you!

JJ VIRGIN

Celebrity Nutrition & Fitness Expert, NY Times Bestselling Author

<http://www.jjvirgin.com>

In September 2012, my teenage son Grant became the victim of a hit-and run-driver and left for dead in the street. Over those next weeks, I sat with him in the ICU while he was in a coma, followed by months in the hospital for recovery.

Grant's tragedy occurred while I was launching what would become my New York Times bestseller *The Virgin Diet*. I had publishers, readers, and an entire team depending on that book. As the sole supporter for my family, I also depended on its success financially.



Needless to say, my ability to tolerate stress became challenged during this extremely difficult time.

To juggle those daunting responsibilities, I had to be at my best. That entailed clean eating, supplements, exercise, and at least 7 hours' sleep every night.

All those things helped, but I found practicing daily intentioning most helpful to manage stress.

Every morning, I write what I feel grateful for as well as my short- and long-term goals. I call these "stretch goals." In Grant's case, that involved him becoming his healthiest, most vibrant self. I intentioned Grant being even better than before the accident, 110% improvement.

Then I share these with others to gather support and stay positive as intentions become reality.

My family is living proof intentioning works. Grant is on his way to complete recovery - actually becoming better than before - and continues to inspire others to become their best selves.

JANINE DRIVER

Keynote Speaker, NY Times Best-Selling Author, President of the Body Language Institute

<http://www.lyintamer.com>

1. **Just before going to meetings I stay off my iPhone and/or my tablet and here's why:**

Social Psychologist Amy Cuddy from Harvard University's Business School conducted an experimental study, "iPosture: The Size of Electronic Consumer Devices Affects Our Behavior." This study proved that the body posture that comes from operating everyday gadgets affects not only your back, but your demeanor.



Cuddy concluded that being on your cellphone causes you to shrink yourself which can decrease confidence and increase stress. This is not ideal before going into an important meeting or giving a speech. Instead, if you need to send emails or check documents, try to use a larger screen like a desktop computer. By doing this it causes you to act more assertively than working on your iPhone or iPad.

2. **Power poses:**

There are a few different power poses that I like to do before important meetings or conversations. My favorite is the Superman pose, when you put your hands in your hips with your elbows out to your sides. These power poses increase testosterone and decrease the cortisol, the stress hormone, in your body. Amy Cuddy proved the positive effects of adopting expansive body postures – hands on hips, feet on desk, and the like during a 2010 report by Andy Yap, Cuddy and Dana Carney, "Power Posing: Brief Nonverbal Displays Affect Neuroendocrine Levels and Risk Tolerance." Deliberately positioning the body in one of these "power poses" for just a few minutes actually affects body chemistry, increasing testosterone levels and decreasing cortisol levels. This leads to higher confidence, more willingness to take risks, and a greater sense of well-being. Great for stress!

3. **When you clap and rub your hands together, this movement sends a message to the brain that success is coming.**

It gets it excited! I especially like this move when I'm uncertain about a situation and am nervous or stressed about how it's going to turn out. I'm literally tricking my brain into thinking there will be great success.

IZABELLA WENTZ

Pharmacist, Patient, Pioneer and Author On The Topic Of Hashimoto's Thyroiditis

<http://www.thyroidpharmacist.com>

1. **Read self-help books on relaxation, overcoming stress, etc.** "How To Stop Worrying And Start Living" by Dale Carnegie is a great classic.
2. **Listen to books on CD while doing things you don't enjoy.** For example I despise traffic and cleaning the house. Listening to a book on CD keeps my busy mind engaged instead of worrying about the traffic or the house.
3. **Be more resilient by being more flexible.** Bruce Lee once said, "Notice that the stiffest tree is most easily cracked, while the bamboo or willow survives by bending with the wind."
4. **Control freaks ... learn to let it go.** You can't rest the weight of the world on your shoulders. Retire from your position as CEO of the Universe. You will be much better off and surprisingly, the world will go on.
5. **Orderliness and predictability are your friends.** Plan your life that way when you can. Catch up on bills, checkbooks, and your long to-do lists. Keep your space neat and clean. Schedule times to clean the house and catch up on life, not just big events. Make sure you schedule down time as well.
6. **Mindfulness.** Pausing, and being present and observant of how things are affecting you can be a great way to learn how to relax yourself.



DR. DATIS KHARRAZIAN

Innovator In Non-Pharmaceutical Treatments For Chronic Illnesses, Autoimmune Disorders & Neurological Disorders

<http://thyroidbook.com>

One of the most important and most overlooked ways to combat stress is to manage your blood sugar. Most people today are dealing with low blood sugar, high blood sugar, or both. If you feel more energetic after eating your blood sugar is too low. If you feel drowsy after eating, your blood sugar is too high. You should simply feel no longer hungry – energy levels remain even when blood sugar is stable.

Blood sugar highs and lows are enormously stressful on the body and the brain, contributing to myriad health imbalances. It never ceases to amaze me how many symptoms can be resolved and health conditions improved simply by adopting eating habits that keep blood sugar stable.



DR. JILL CARNAHAN

Author, Speaker, And Founder Of Flatiron Functional Medicine

<http://www.jillcarnahan.com>

Did you know that one of the most healthy emotions for your heart is gratitude (the other is love). **Start making habits today of incorporating an “attitude of gratitude” into each day.** It works because it recruits other positive emotions like joy, contentment, hope. Conscious appreciation actually gives the mind a boost. It can even help to produce endorphins and dampen the stress response. Studies show that gratitude is a habit, just like flossing.



Here are some helpful hints to get you going:

1. **Keep a gratitude journal** - one of the most effective ways to cultivate appreciation is to write it down. I often have patients keep a journal and right down five things before bed that made them happy or thankful that day.
2. **Express yourself** - it's important to share gratitude with others. If you really articulate what you are grateful for, it's contagious. Be specific and consider delivering a handwritten note of thanks.
3. **See a bigger picture** - grateful people spot the positive without denying the pain or hurt.
4. **Celebrate Thanksgiving EVERY day!** Many families do a round of thanksgiving at the dinner table each night. My husband & I have a special box which we drop notes of blessing or thanks into each day, then at the end of the month or week, we read them together to remind us of all the good things God has done for us.

DR. JEN LANDA

Hormone Expert And Author Of The Sex Drive Solution For Women

<http://DrJenniferLanda.com>

I eat lots of chocolate!!

Cocoa that is... I put 100% cocoa powder in my protein shake every morning, I eat 100% cocoa nibs with nuts as a snack throughout the day, I have a small piece of very dark chocolate (85% cocoa or more) after lunch and dinner. Sometimes I make a dairy-free chocolate mousse with 100% cocoa powder, avocado and coconut cream (yum!) for dessert. High cocoa consumption has become a daily necessity for me.



I even carry my favorite chocolate bars with me on trips – organic Green and Black’s 85% cocoa. Cocoa is the strongest antioxidant on the planet (yes, stronger than acai berries) so it protects me from the constant attack we’re under from pollutants to pesticides in our world (which are huge unseen stressors). Cocoa is high in magnesium which is super-calming. Cocoa also contains chemicals that are the same as those in your body when you fall in love – who couldn’t use more of that to combat stress?

All my go to sources of cocoa are low in sugar so I get to eat the chocolate without the weight gain! A piece of super dark chocolate and a cup of herbal tea and everything is right with my world.

DR. STEVEN HOTZE

Author, Radio Host, And Founder Of The Hotze Health & Wellness Center

<http://www.hotzehwc.com>

Chronic stress can wreak havoc on the body, from disrupting sleep and hormone levels to more serious conditions like infections, heart disease, cancer and stroke. Pharmaceutical drugs only mask symptoms and contain toxins with negative side effects.

Take control with these tips to relieve stress, naturally:

- **Build your arsenal:** Vitamin C, magnesium, B-complex, GABA, 5-HTP, green tea, phosphatidyl serine, amino acid complex, rhodiola, and inositol.
- **Evaluate for adrenal fatigue:** Also known as chronic fatigue, adrenal fatigue is when the adrenal glands through chronic stress cannot meet the body's demands for cortisol.
- **Bioidentical cortisol** can help the adrenal glands recover.
- Eat organic fruits and vegetables. Avoid processed food and sugars.
- Engage in exercise.
- **Invest in good sleep** to give your body a chance to restore itself.
- Close your eyes and breathe deeply for a minute. Repeat as needed.
- **Write down your goals, what you want to achieve, and take action.** This will give you peace of mind in knowing that you are working towards your goal.
- **Declutter your home and work space.** You will be surprised at how calm and in control you will feel.



KRISTA STRYKER

Personal Trainer And Founder Of 12 Minute Athlete

<http://www.12minuteathlete.com>

When I'm stressed out, the very best thing for me is to do to try and de-stress is to do a really intense, heart pounding HIIT workout.

Jump roping, burpees, box jumps, pull ups, even boxing—it all helps me clear my head, so long as I end up exhausted, muscles shaking, with sweat dripping like crazy afterwards.

If my workout still doesn't do it, the one foolproof method that nearly always does the trick is to go for a really long walk outside.

Whether it's taking my dog to the beach for a few hours or exploring the city where I live by foot, there's nothing quite like fresh air plus a little exercise to melt away the day's worries and put things into perspective.



CHRIS LEMIG

Writer, Speaker, And Student Of Tibetan Buddhism

<http://www.thenarrowwaybook.com>

I may be a Buddhist but I still get stressed. Work, writing, study, and other commitments pile up and the result for me is often a twisted, knotted stomach full of stress.

But fortunately, the Buddhist tool kit is full of all kinds of great things I can use to ease that suffering.

My favorite technique is a spin on a Buddhist practice called The Four Immeasurable Emotions. I just work with the first two: Immeasurable Love and Compassion.



When I get stressed, I try to recall that I'm not the only one in the world who's having such stressful feelings. In fact, most sentient beings suffer from stress many times throughout the course of any given day.

I then tell myself:

"May I and all beings be free from stress and worry. May I and all sentient beings be well and at ease. May we all find temporary and ultimate happiness".

This does two things: It takes the focus off of me, effectively crashing the pity party. Second, it puts things into perspective and gives me some space from my own stress.

Give this practice a try and see if it works for you.

TAMARA STAR

Best Selling Author, Life Coach, Creator Of The Original 40-Day Personal Reboot Camp For Women

<http://www.dailytransformations.com>

I believe like happiness, stress is a choice. How we respond to any situation is dictated by our habits and our beliefs. **Here are my top ways to instantly transform stress.**

- Close your eyes and inhale through your nose to a count of 8, hold your breath for a second or two and exhale through your mouth. Exhaling through your mouth consciously activates the vagus nerve, which in turn, activates the parasympathetic nervous system. Muscles relax, oxygen supplies increase and the body starts to produce endorphins - your feel good hormones.
- Go for a walk in nature. Tune into what you see, hear, and feel. When we tune into our senses, we're delivered into the present moment where peace resides.
- Eat a salad or drink a green smoothie. Greens contain high amounts of minerals, which are natural muscle relaxants.
- Smell essential oils. Essential oils cross the blood brain barrier of the brain (like drugs) affecting the limbic system, the seat of your emotions.
- Yawn. Yawning releases tension.
- Lay on the earth. Earthing has been scientifically proven to reduce stress and bring our nervous systems back into balance. The first thing animals do when sick or wounded is lay on the earth.
- Organize something. Focusing on a task, while experiencing the feel-good side effects of an instant accomplishment, works!



Stress-Busting Tips From 50 Health Experts

- Spin. The Sufis understood the power of spinning. Spin like a child: arms out wide, legs hip width apart and go for it.
- Deep belly breathe. Shallow breathing activates the meridians near the collarbones that pump up your fight or flight response (stress).
- Tone. Literally make noise. Moan, sigh, or even talk gibberish. Making sound moves energy.
- Get outside and look at the sky. The vastness of what's above reminds us of a greater mystery and vast possibility, ultimately putting everything into perspective.

LISA RICHARDS

Digestive Health Expert, Author of the Ultimate Candida Diet program

<http://www.thecandidadiet.com>

My favorite remedy for stress is very simple – taking a long walk along the beach near my house. I like to stop in a quiet area and do some deep breathing exercises. The rhythmic sound of the waves, the fresh sea air, and the warmth of the sun all have a tremendously calming effect.

My readers know that I'm also a huge proponent of good quality probiotics, and recent studies have suggested that they can reduce long term stress levels. One animal

study in 2011 showed that mice fed probiotics had a lower physiological response to stress than mice who had not taken probiotics. And in a more recent human study at UCLA, researchers found that supplementing the diet with probiotic yogurt actually reduced the response to emotional tasks.



DR. DEANINE PICCIANO

Doctor Of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture Physician, Specializing In Women & Children's Health

<http://drdeanine.com>

Lets face it. Optimal health does not just depend on how perfect your diet is, or on taking a particular supplement or herb. Although all that can help, it is ultimately how you handle stress and your thoughts that also influence your state of health.

We cannot control everyone, everything, or what happens to us. We know that. We sometimes cannot control how we respond in our body, especially on a subconscious or visceral level, to the events that occur in our lives. But we can breathe through it in a way that keeps us in the driver's seat.



One of the most powerful ways you can stay centered and counteract the physical effects of stress is to breathe optimally. Breathing deeply affects your life force and how it flows. When the "fight or flight" aspect of your nervous system is on, your body perceives you are under attack, and breath often becomes shallow and chest-centered. **Breathing deeply, or diaphragmatic "belly breathing", can lower cortisol and signal to your nervous system to "rest and digest" as opposed to "fight or flight".**

A true functional, relaxing breath starts slowly in the lower belly and moves upward toward the heart. Like water filling a vase, your breath should fill in the bottom of your belly first and move up to the chest. If you notice that you are not breathing optimally, it is probably because your midsection, diaphragm or chest feels tight. A key piece of enhancing your capacity to breathe is to release the tight diaphragms and muscles that are preventing you from full, optimal breathing. Releasing a tight diaphragm or muscle can be accomplished by intention, a stretch, yoga postures, bodywork or acupuncture or having a CranioSacral Treatment.

Stress-Busting Tips From 50 Health Experts

Connecting with deep breathing is the key to power in the present moment and sets the foundation for healing. So next time you feel stressed, BREATHE, be the vase, stay centered and let it go.

TONI BERNHARD

Author Of The Award-Winning “How To Be Sick”

<http://www.tonibernhard.com>

My best tip for coping with stress is based on Active Listening, a technique where you feed back to others their emotional pain by restating it in your own words, so that the they feel heard and understood.

My twist is that I Active Listen to myself. I craft a phrase that addresses specifically the stress I’m experiencing at the moment, and then I speak it silently or softly to myself. Two examples: “It’s hard to feel like I’m missing out on so much because I’m too sick to participate”; “It’s tough to be in pain so much of the time even though my body is doing its best to support me.”

Crafting phrases that speak directly to what I’m feeling connects me with my own heart. The result is that I feel deeply cared for and this alleviates my stress.



CHRISTA ORECCHIO

Clinical Nutritionist, Holistic Health Counselor, Founder Of The Whole Journey

<http://www.thewholejourney.com>

Our energy level, digestive wellness, and state of mind can be dramatically, positively or negatively, affected by our breathing. **Slow, deep breathing helps to alkalize the body while activating the parasympathetic nervous system which gives the body a chance to recuperate, regenerate, and heal.** Incorporate five minutes of deep breathing a day, and you will surely experience tremendous benefits.



When you watch a baby breathe, the whole belly expands and contracts. As we age, we tend to breathe more from our chest, resulting in shorter, shallower breaths. As you concentrate on “breathing from your belly,” you will bring more oxygen into your lungs and throughout your body. You will feel more focused and centered. The beauty of these techniques is that you can do them anywhere – in the car, in the middle of a meeting, before a big event, etc. They do not require special equipment, and you don’t even have to close your eyes once you have learned the techniques.

MEGAN BRUNEAU

Registered Clinical Counsellor And Blogger

<http://oneshrinksperspective.com>

As a mental health professional, I often get stressed about being stressed. I worry about the effect it'll have on my health, and call myself a hypocrite for "not coping properly" So how do I deal with stress when it comes? I do the following:

First, I practice empathy and compassion toward myself. For example, "Megan, you're feeling stressed out right now and that's OK. You've got a lot going on, and stress is an inevitable part of life-it means you care about something."



Then, I look at my expectations vs my reality. If my expectations exceed my reality, I see if there's a way I can lessen the gap. This might require lowering my expectations, getting sh*t done, or a little bit of both. For example, let's say I'm stressed about the three articles I have due that day, have to pack to go out of town for the weekend, and am supposed to attend a friend's birthday celebration that night. I could either a) complete all tasks (which is unlikely) so my reality meets my expectations, b) choose not to do one or some of the tasks, so my expectations are lowered to a more manageable reality, or c) pack my essentials, knowing I'll probably forget a couple of things, work on one of the articles and ask for an extension on the others, and pop by my friend's birthday for an hour (or any combination of those two) to lessen the expectation-reality stress gap.

Next, I ask myself what's in my control and what's out of my control. Much of the time we stress about things that are out of our control (e.g. earthquakes, ending up alone, being judged by others), and it's exhausting. Ask yourself what's in your control and what's out of your control. If what you're stressing about is out of your control, try to let go and sit in that uncertainty with compassion.

Then, I ask myself “What’s the worst that’s going to happen?” Often we create a catastrophe in our minds about what might happen if we don’t get into the program/complete the project/lose the weight/pay the bill/etc. Rarely do we actually play out the likely scenarios. Yes, maybe you’ll have to reapply. Maybe you get reprimanded by your boss. Maybe you won’t fit into the dress you were hoping to wear to the wedding. But can you live with that? Often there’s more stress around the unknown than the known, so play out the scenarios and you might find they’re actually less catastrophic than you previously believed.

Finally, I practice mindfulness. I focus on my breath, the sights around me, a mantra like “Anicca” (impermanence), or do a few sun salutations. I ensure I practice non-judgment and compassion while doing so. All the while, I remind myself that reality is subjective, I have the freedom to spend mine how I choose, and I give myself permission to be in the moment. Personally, I find these strategies helpful in changing transforming debilitating stress into more productive stress.

DANA CLAUDAT

Modern Feng Shui Master, Designer, Art & Wellness Curator

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When I am overwhelmed or over-scheduled, you will find me cleaning my house. Dusting, mopping and washing the windows is one of my automatic ways to get more focus. Its like active meditation. On the subject of meditation, my Buddhist practice of chanting is what I increase as my stress increases! It seems like a paradox, but one of the ways I unwind is to elevate the energy of the day out of a place of stress and into excitement.



On a holistic level, drinking powdered magnesium (a teaspoon of Natural Calm in a cup of hot water) has been my never-fail physical stress soother, along with green smoothies (I drink blended kale, collard or spinach with fruit for extra nutrient energy). I take lots of salt baths (sea salt, pink salt and my classic Epsom salt in a hot tub filled with water and a teaspoon of vitamin c crystals to dissipate the chlorine in the water), and also break out my journal when I realize its time to dispel the toxic ideas and body by-products of stress.

And, sleep is my ultimate end to stress. When I am having a “day” I typically go to bed very early rather than forcing myself through a hard time. I let my mind sort things out in its “repair cycle” of sleep and burn a little incense before bed to create a sense of dreaminess to let my mind wander to a space where solutions and opportunity tend to be waiting in the morning.

DIANE SANFILIPPO

Certified Holistic Nutritionist, Best Selling Author, Holistic Lifestyle Coach

<http://balancedbites.com>

You don't have to let stress overwhelm you. You can be proactive by avoiding toxic situations, people, dietary choices, and other stressors that you have control over. **Nurture your mind, body, and spirit with these easy tips:**



- Eat real food—quality proteins and fats with a variety of organic fruits and vegetables; starch as needed for pre/post workout energy and recovery. Avoid nutrient poor refined foods and beverages. Drink pure water.
- Include stress supporting nutrients:
 - Vitamin C - Citrus, strawberries, kiwi, cruciferous vegetables and green leafy vegetables.
 - Vitamin B Complex- Liver, meat, seafood (wild/pasture raised, grass-fed sources), seeds, mushrooms.
 - Magnesium - Green leafy vegetables, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds/tahini, and salmon.
 - Omega 3 EFAs - Fatty cold water fish (salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines, etc.) and/or Green Pasture fermented cod liver oil.
- Season with mineral rich sea salt – supporting your adrenal glands.
- Prioritize sleep – allowing your body to rest, restore, and detoxify optimally.
- Avoid over-training – balance workouts with restorative exercises such as Qigong, meditation, walking, and yoga.
- Keep a gratitude list.
- Always plan for new adventures!

SUSIE MANTELL

Award-Winning Stress Relief Expert, Bestselling Author

<http://www.relaxintuit.com>

Here are 3 stress relief tips, and reasons why each is beneficial:



1. **Overworked? Overwhelmed? Shift Gears!**

Take a brisk walk outdoors. Smile at six people along the way. Clear your desk, and work for thirty minute intervals with five minute breaks to walk, stretch and socialize.

Why? Isolation is a close companion to “The Blahhs.” Fresh air, movement, and cheerful interaction are like essential daily nutrients to the spirit. So is smiling. External clutter can increase internal stress.

2. **Stress Got You Down? Choose healthy foods, beverages... and relationships.** Consider your sugar, alcohol and caffeine intake. Keep a water bottle nearby to stay hydrated. Talk with your physician, and make fun plans with friends.

Why? Many foods, medications and conditions can influence mood and concentration. Dehydration can too. Supportive conversation, shared experiences, and laughter can all lift a weary spirit.

3. **Sleepless in... Wherever?**

Practice Mindfulness: Clear your head with mini-meditations for example, “I exhale worries, responsibilities and mental chatter, inhaling deep comfort and profound peace.” Make someone else happy. Count blessings.

Why? Internal self-talk has great power. Pausing in-the-moment, the body-mind releases in the open space. Creating happiness for others has a way of, well... making us happy too!

MARCELLE PICK

OB/GYN Nurse Practitioner, Speaker, Author, And Co-Founder Of Women To Women

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- Put a few Post-it notes around your home and work space that remind you to just breathe. Try putting one on the receiver of every phone and by your computer.
- Once a day – or even once a week – step outside and take five deep breaths.
- Write yourself a prescription to say, “No.” Use it the next time someone asks you to do something you’d really rather not do. Imagine that I, your health-care practitioner, or someone else concerned with your well-being, has prescribed this “No” for you – and then use the time to do something that makes you happy.
- If you find it difficult to prepare healthy food for yourself, consider picking up your dinner at the grocery store (many places have prepared-food counters) or even having a local caterer deliver your meals. However, be mindful of where you shop, since so many prepared foods are overloaded with salt, sugar, unhealthy fats, additives, and artificial ingredients.
- Take a page from the book of Norman Cousins, the American journalist who healed his cancer by watching funny movies, and give yourself time to do something that makes you laugh out loud.
- Whether or not you are traditionally religious, offer up a prayer of gratitude for being alive right now. Take a deep breath; hold it a moment, then exhale. Do it a second time, giving thanks for the ability to breathe in and out, having the breath of life.
- Make some quiet time for yourself – time free from busyness – to get in touch with your spiritual side. You might attend a formal religious event, sit quietly in a peaceful place, or read an inspiring passage or poem. Whether or not you are traditionally religious, you will benefit from taking some time to



Stress-Busting Tips From 50 Health Experts

consider the deeper meaning of your life, rather than simply rushing from task to task.

Remember that any internal response is what I call an 'inside job'. Is the the thought process that you have, the physical response and the dwelling over and over, none of which will change the outcome. **Everyone has struggles and stressors which show up – it is how we work with the response that makes the difference.**

SHERI FOGARTY

Reiki Master, Spiritual Healer And Wellness Coach

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As a Reiki Master and Spiritual Healer my technique for de-stressing involves clearing my energy body and raising my vibration. I believe that learning to raise the vibration of our chakras (wheels of light) can prevent the negative effects of stress and leave us feeling more energetic and at peace.

I begin by sitting on my meditation cushion and put on relaxation music. I light a candle and burn sage to cleanse my energy body and bring me into the present moment. With my spine straight and my body relaxed I place my hands gently on my lap.

I gently inhale and exhale through my nose. I allow whatever thoughts come to mind and gently dismiss them. My body naturally starts to relax and as this happens I become more aware of my inner self - my energy body.

I begin to visualize a ball of white light above the crown of my head. This ball of white light enters my crown chakra, slowly making its way down my body. As this ball of light merges with my energy body I begin to feel more and more relaxed. I continue to visualize this ball of light as it moves down each chakra. From the crown chakra to the third eye chakra, to the throat chakra to the heart chakra, to the solar plexus chakra, to the sacral chakra and then the root chakra.

As the ball of white light enters each chakra I become more aware of my energy body and I begin to sense the vibration of each chakra. As I become more aware of my energy body I feel instantly connected to the universe and feel a sensation of oneness and peace. I give thanks and slowly open my eyes. I realize that whatever caused me stress that day will now be looked at from a place of peace.



ERIN OLIVO, PHD

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Have you noticed that when you're stressed out you stop doing things that make you feel good? When there's no stress you meet friends for coffee, go to a yoga class, or take your dog for a morning walk. But the minute you find yourself stressed out by work or family issues, you feel crunched for time and stop doing these things. It's a very common response but it actually exacerbates your stress. One of the easiest strategies for stress relief is to do something you love.



I teach my patients (and also practice) Wise Mind Living, an approach to life where you have the confidence and wisdom to deal with stressors because you're living with awareness and balance. One way to do this is by paying attention to the choices you're making about how you use your time. When you're stressed out it's easy to focus on the "shoulds" of life, and ignore the "wants." So make a list of the things you want to do - things that you find fun or relaxing - and the next time you're feeling stressed, make sure you're doing at least one of these activities per week (or more if you can). Balancing the "wants" and "shoulds" in your life is key to living with less stress!

DAWN FALCONE

Design/Organizing Expert, Teaches Busy 'Mompreneurs' How To Curb The Clutter And Chaos

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I'm a firm believer that clutter, whether its physical or mental, adds to stress levels in a big way. If you're feeling overwhelmed or stressed-out, take a good look at your home.

Are piles everywhere? Do you have unfinished projects staring you in the face? Take a deep breath in and exhale. Now start small (baby steps, Baby!).

Don't think about organizing an entire room. Start with a drawer or desktop and slowly move on from there. Let go of anything broken or missing pieces. Say goodbye to things you haven't used in more than 6 months. If it doesn't make you feel good, let it go.

What about non-physical clutter? Is your weekly calendar or to-do list overloaded? Cross off anything that's not a top priority. Delegate whatever you can, and learn to say no. Remember, saying no to others is saying yes to yourself. Reducing and removing all types of clutter will give you breathing room.



KERI BROOKS

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Here are my 4 simple ways to reverse adrenal fatigue (AKA "Feel Like Crap Syndrome"):

1. **Eat Real Food.** Processed foods, GMO'S , sugar, caffeine, and fake fats lead to chronic inflammation and nutritional deficiencies. When this happens, your adrenal function slows down resulting in exhaustion, poor sleep, weight loss resistance and increased irritability.
2. **Sleep MATTERS.** One of the most taxing stressors on your adrenal glands is poor sleep or lack of sleep. Ideally, you should be in bed by 10pm and wake up by 6:30am. Practice good sleep hygiene by having a consistent wind down routine. I personally love to end the day with an Epson Salt bath which helps with muscle relaxation and deeper sleep.
3. **Stop skipping meals and overeating.** Low and high blood sugar is a quick way to burn out your adrenals and shut down your metabolism. Try to schedule your meals every 3-4 hours and balance them with protein, fat and veggies.
4. **Breathe, laugh, do Yoga and have SEX.** Meditation, restorative yoga and sex have all demonstrated huge benefits towards lower cortisol levels, and turning on your parasympathetic nervous system. The result: you feel relaxed and revitalized!



DR. GREG EMERSON

Internationally Recognized Authority on Health, Vitality and Longevity

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We are told that there is no such thing as a stressful situation. We are taught that it's our interpretation of the situation that is stressful. We do personal development courses encouraging us to love ourselves more and to change the meaning of the events in our lives. We read books on stress suggesting we get leverage in our lives, unburdening our ever increasing workloads. We seek counsel from wise people who let us know that it is ok to walk away from parts of our lives. We take wonderful herbs like ginseng, repair our adrenal glands and practice meditation and yoga.



I have tried them all over the years. They have all helped. I am very grateful for the advice. I teach it. But over the years I realized that I was just scratching the surface. There was something deeper that was not directly palpable but lurked in the shadows like a wolf in the wild. Yet in the end it was the wolf that freed me.

My stress, our stress I realized, was that we had been removed from nature. We were from the wild but now living in a zoo. Separate any organism from its natural environment and it will be stressed. We were no longer living the life that we were designed for, eating the foods or drinking the water we evolved doing, we weren't moving like we are designed to. We live in a zoo that is unnatural to us.

The greatest tools I have discovered to manage my stress is to move back into a life that I was more designed for. I have returned to the earth... where I live, how I eat, what I drink, how I move. My purpose in life has changed, and so with it, my ability to cope with stress.

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