

# Stress Reduction Strategies

- Involve yourself in some form of daily “time out” experience. For example, relaxation, meditation, non-competitive physical activity, listening to music, or playing an instrument. Take time for pleasure unrelated to your work.
- Learn to live much more of your life in the present. Focus your awareness of what is happening *now* rather than what did happen or will happen. Try letting go of guilt, worry, uptightness, etc.
- Re-structure your approach to daily activities and problems so that you are coping with only one task or demand at a time.
- Examine your relationship to time. Slow down your pace of walking, talking and eating. Take time to smell the flowers.
- Organize your day to eliminate unnecessary deadlines. Instead of procrastinating until the very last minute, schedule your work so that it’s done without panic, building in time for the unexpected.
- Allow enough time so that you don’t have to rush to get somewhere, get out of bed earlier if it will help.
- Set priorities. Determine what is really important and learn to delegate.
- Learn to say “no”. Eliminate activities that drain you unless it contributes to your socioeconomic well-being. Say “no” to new opportunities or responsibilities if they would overload or rush your day. This means knowing your priorities.
- Make your midday break a REAL break. Don’t use that time to do more work. Take the time to walk around the block, sit under a tree, or window-shop. Schedule a lunch with a friend once a week.
- Keep your environment as orderly and esthetically pleasing as possible. Look for ways to cut down on traffic or interruptions by people stopping by (e.g. a small table with a nice plant instead of a chair by a desk can eliminate some visitors with time on their hands.)
- Examine which of your beliefs tend to be related to the experience of distress. Do you, for example, believe “that you must be liked by everyone,” “that success (recognition by others) is synonymous with happiness and fulfillment,” “that you must be perfect,” etc?

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