

HEALTHFUL *Tips*

~HEALTHFUL TIPS TO DECREASE STRESS~

Try out a variety of stress-reducing methods and see which of them work best for you. Find something that you look forward to that leaves you feeling refreshed. Just 15 minutes a day can help you to lead a more relaxed life. You will gain freedom from compulsive worry and negative thoughts, an increase in concentration and awareness, more restful sleep and improved immunity, improved performance and efficiency and decreased symptoms of stress and anxiety.

Always at the top of the list is regular exercise—a great stress buster and mood elevator.

Schedule relaxing activities by writing them on your calendar.

Read a book or magazine that you enjoy.

Light a scented candle.

Listen to music that you enjoy.

Have dinner at your favorite restaurant.

Invite a friend you haven't seen in awhile over for a movie.

Try meditation or yoga.

Ride your bicycle through the forest preserve.

Go on a picnic.

Carry a small notebook with you everywhere. Write down things

that you think of throughout the day that need to be done. Go through the list now and then. Cross off what you really don't need to do. As you work your way through the list, check off what you've done. You'll feel more in control of your life.

Try open-eyed meditation. One way of doing this is by gazing softly (not staring) at a candle flame. Darken the room, light a candle, sit comfortably and gaze at the flame. The aim is to have a focus for the mind. So when your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to the flame. Calming the mind is the basis of all relaxation techniques.

Create a home spa. Set aside at least 1/2 hour, put on soft music, light candles, run a hot bath with your favorite scented bubbles and breathe deeply.

Even if you can't live your dreams all the time, at least make time for them.

Consider the big picture to see where your deepest satisfaction lies, and live your life with no regrets

Breathe Deeply—Inhale deeply through your nose. Pull the air all the way down, deep into the lungs. Hold the breath for a count of six. Exhale slowly through the mouth to the count of six. Do this for several minutes.

Find ways to express yourself rather than keeping your feelings inside—Call a friend, join a group, blog, keep a journal, talk to your pet, enlist the help of a therapist, write a poem or short story.

Make a list of activities that give you joy and do at least three of them everyday. Rather than thinking of big activities, like vacations, focus on small activities that give you joy.

Laughter is a great way to relieve stress. Encourage laughter by watching funny movies, reading funny stories, and learning to look at the lighter side of life.

Replace negative thoughts with positive powerful thoughts and surround yourself with positive people. Look for the positives in every situation. The negatives are there; you can just choose not to dwell upon them.

Massage therapy can relax muscles and relieve stress.

Be realistic with your expectations. Don't expect to be in harmony all of the time.

Fully realize that the only person you can change is yourself. Learn to accept others for who they are at this point in their life. Ask yourself what you can do to make a stressful relationship better.