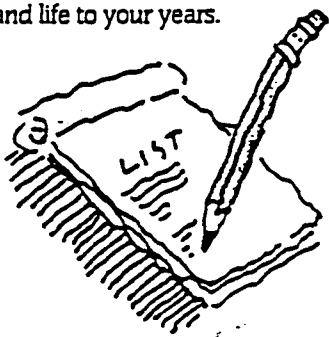


50 PROVEN STRESS REDUCERS

Stress is a response to a perceived need for action. If you need to do something and aren't able to, the resulting physical and psychological pressure causes stress. The key, then, to avoiding stress is to learn how to respond to it in a positive way. Use the following tips to reduce stress. You'll add years to your life and life to your years.



1. Don't rely on your memory. Write down appointments, when to pick up the laundry, when library books are due, etc.

2. Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning so you don't start the day feeling frazzled.

3. Prepare for the morning the evening before. Set the breakfast table, make lunches and lay out your clothes.

4. Do nothing which, after being done, leads you to tell a lie.

5. Keep a duplicate car key in your wallet.

6. Practice preventive maintenance on your car, appliances, home, teeth and personal relationships. They'll be less likely to fall apart at the worst possible moment.

7. Keep reading materials with you to enjoy while you wait in lines or for appointments.

8. Procrastination is stressful. Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do it today; whatever you want to do today, do it now. Hard work is simply the accumulation of easy things you didn't do when you should have done them.

9. Think of your next embarrassing situation as an episode of television's "Candid Camera."

10. Organize your home and work space so that everything has its place. You won't have to go through the stress of losing things.

11. Plan ahead. Don't let the gas tank get below one-quarter full, keep a well-stocked "emergency shelf" of supplies at home and at work, buy postage stamps and bus tokens *before* you run out and keep some parking meter change in the glove compartment.



12. Schedule a realistic day. Allow ample time between appointments so you don't have to rush, worry and apologize for being late.

13. Relax your standards. The world will not end if the house doesn't get cleaned this weekend.



14. An instant cure for most stress: 30 minutes of brisk walking or other aerobic exercise.

15. Take the scissors to your credit cards.

16. Talk it out. Discussing your problems with a trusted friend can help clear your mind of confusion so you can concentrate on problem solving.

17. Make friends with non-worriers.

18. Every day, make time for solitude.

19. Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant with the weak and erring—for sometime in life you will have been all of these.

20. Simplify, simplify, simplify.

21. Say "No thank you" to extra projects you don't have time or energy for.

22. Ask questions, repeat back what you heard the other person say and repeat back directions. Taking a minute to be sure you understand can save hours.

23. Donate to a worthy cause. Getting rid of what you don't need will make what you do need easier to find.

24. Get enough sleep. If necessary, use an alarm clock to remind you to go to bed.

25. Set up contingency plans—just in case. "If either of us is delayed," "If we get separated in the mall, here's what we'll do..."

26. When under stress, we tend to breathe in short, shallow breaths. Check your breathing throughout the day, and before, during and after high-pressure situations. Relax your stomach muscles and take several deep, slow breaths. When you're relaxed, both your abdomen and chest expand when you breathe.

27. Turn "needs" into preferences. Our basic needs are food, water and keeping warm. Everything else is just a preference.

28. Don't put up with things that don't

50 PROVEN STRESS REDUCERS

- 2 -

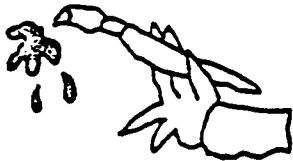
work right. If something is a constant aggravation, get it fixed or replace it.

29. Put brain in gear before opening mouth. Before you say anything, ask yourself whether what you are about to say is 1) true, 2) kind and 3) necessary.

30. Stop worrying. If something concerns you, do something about it. If you can't do anything about it, let go of it.

31. Unplug your phone while you eat dinner or take a bath. It's unlikely there will be a terrible emergency during that time.

32. For every one thing that goes wrong, there are 50 or 100 blessings. Count them.



33. Write your thoughts and feelings in a journal to help you clarify things and put them into perspective.

34. The next time someone cuts you off in traffic or stops suddenly, instead of getting mad, think of instances when you've unintentionally (or intentionally) done the same thing. Have you *never* made a driving mistake?

35. Label situations differently.

Are you really "furious" about a certain situation? What if you labeled your feelings "angry" or merely "annoyed" instead? Are you really "crushed"? How about labeling your feelings "let down" or "disappointed" instead?

There is a tendency to select descriptive words that are stronger than necessary. If World War II was "terrible," can you describe your flat tire as "terrible"? No, it's just a temporary inconvenience. Putting things in perspective can eliminate or reduce stress.

36. Learn to live one day at a time.

37. Every day, do at least one thing you really enjoy.

38. Be kind to unkind people. (They probably need it the most.)

39. Don't sweat the small stuff.

40. Laugh!

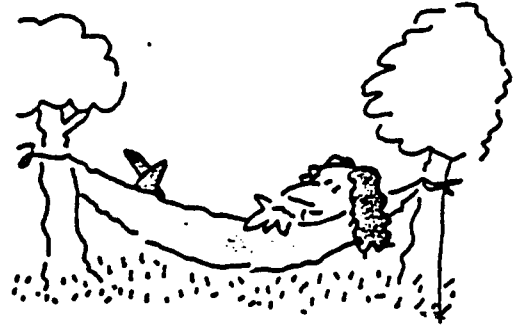
41. Make promises sparingly and keep them faithfully.

42. Remember that the best things in life aren't things.

43. Try this relaxation technique: Inhale deeply through your nose to the count of eight. Then, with lips puckered, exhale very slowly through your mouth to the count of 16. Concentrate on the long sighing sound and feel tension dissolve. Repeat 10 times.

44. Add an ounce of love to everything you do.

45. Forget about counting to 10. Count to 100 before saying anything that could make matters worse.



46. Learn to delegate responsibility to capable people.

47. Using the television or radio for background noise or "company" can be stressful. Learn to enjoy solitude and to enjoy thinking.

48. If an unpleasant task faces you, do it *early* in the day and get it over with.

49. Do one thing at a time.

50. Focus on understanding rather than on being understood; on loving rather than on being loved.

