

9 Tips for Decreasing Stress

When your heart is continually racing and you're always short of breath, even when you're sitting still, then you *know* you're stressed. Here are some tips to lower the pressure:

✓ Slow down

Do everything you want to do—work, talk, play, make love—at a slower speed. Not only will you find that you enjoy doing things more slowly, you'll find that you make fewer mistakes.

✓ Do only one thing at a time

Multi-tasking is fine until it over tasks you. (Remember, your cell phone has voicemail.)

✓ Focus on what you're doing

Make sure that you are not, say, working at your job but thinking about going food shopping later. If you are working, work and think about work. If you are playing, play and think about play.

✓ Breathe

Breathing quickly and shallowly tells your body that you are under attack, panicked, or out of shape—all of which heighten stress. So breathe. Slowly, very deeply, calmly.

✓ Give yourself time for unstructured play

In addition to sleep, you need time to noodle around or do nothing. Remember how, as a kid, you could stare at the clouds for hours? Try doing it again.

✓ Write down and prioritize your “to do” list

Instead of worrying about whether you'll forget a necessary task, write it down. Some of the most efficient people in the world use day planners that are the size of briefcases. There's a reason why...planning your activities “on paper” works.

✓ Give your body attention

Exercise, particularly vigorous exercise, decreases stress. So get up and move. In addition to exercise, you can use an easy meditation exercise to reduce stress. For at least 10 minutes a day, spend time focusing only on your five senses (see, hear, smell, touch, and taste).

✓ Decrease sugar, caffeine, and alcohol intake

Sugar and caffeine speed you up. Alcohol, while slowing you down, has its own ways of increasing stress (it creates restless sleep). Drink water instead of caffeinated beverages.

✓ Get your zzzzzzz's

A good night's sleep is an incredible stress reducer. One full night's sleep—followed by another, and another, and another—helps you feel better able to face the day.

As an experienced mind-body coach, I have seen a combination of meditation, mindfulness, hypnosis, and “changing how you think about things” virtually *eliminate* panic attacks. And not every counselor has taken the time to develop all of these skills. If my approach can work wonders with panic attacks, just think what it can do for every day stress. Call me now to find out how our work together will lead to a more peaceful experience of your life.