

Tips for Stress Reduction

Written by Leslie K. Hughes

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Did you know that Arizona was just named one of the 10 most stressed out states? We were surprised too. Arizona certainly has enough sunshine to meet the requirements for vitamin D intake, but there is so much more to managing stress than that. Not taking care of those extra stresses in your life can be more detrimental to your health than you may know. However, there is no need to worry. Between with expert advice from Dr. Anne-Marie Feyre-Melk of Scottsdale's Optimal Heart Attack & Stroke Prevention Center, you will get that built-up stress worked out in no time and have Arizona on its way to being the least stressed state in the U.S.

According to Dr. Feyre-Melk, "more than 70 percent of people regularly experience physical or psychological symptoms caused by stress." In many cases, stress releases adrenalin and cortisol, which in turn make your heart race and often cause your digestive system to slow down. When the stressful situation passes, typically your body goes back to normal. "However, in times of chronic stress," says Dr. Feyre-Melk, "the relaxation response doesn't happen enough and the autonomic nervous system become chronically over activated." That is where the real problems begin including anything from depression to obesity to heart disease and everything imaginable in between.

So how do you keep those terrible things from happening to you? The most important this is find a way to relax. Here are some ways for you to keep your cool when you are feeling maxed out.



1. YOGA AND MEDITATION

Even if the flexibility gene skipped you, you can still reap serious benefits from tapping into that inner yogi. The breaths involved with yoga are key to relaxation and allow you to really focus on pushing out your negative thoughts and feelings.

2. START A JOURNAL

Keep your journal by your side and write in it during times of frustration. Writing your feelings out is a great way to get them out of your system in a healthy way. It also helps to really put your feelings of anger in perspective if you go back later in the day and read what you wrote.



3. BE SOCIAL

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Sometimes we get so busy that the last thing we want to do is meet up with a friend for coffee. Don't cut those friends out of your life – they are key to your survival! Tuning out of your life and into the life of another is another great way to ease stress. Also, having a friend to vent to is nice too.

4. GET MOVING

Exercise. No, you don't need to run 10 miles a day or spend two hours at the gym. But you do need to get active. Even a 10 minute walk in your neighborhood will bring immensely positive results to your mind and body.

5. LET THE MUSIC PLAY

Listening to music can lower blood pressure and anxiety, so why not? Choose calming music that allows you to tune out from your surroundings and really focus your mind on relaxing.