

[IMAGE]

5 Stress Solutions

By Editorial Staff

Stress can be a killer - quite literally, research suggests, but it can also make your day-to-day existence miserable. Who wants to walk (or rush) around all day as the oppressive weight of stress takes its toll on your body and mind? Here are five simple strategies to help you deal with stress and get back on the road to health and wellness:

1. *Walk it off.* There are so many physical and mental health benefits to a good walk; when it comes to stress, it's the perfect opportunity to relax, enjoy the outdoors and reduce your stress, either by forgetting about it for a while or having the chance to process it. In fact, in many cases stress isn't caused by a particular situation, but by the sense that you can't *escape* your situation – your too-loud, too-hecktic, too-frantic, responsibility-filled day. A walk is your chance to escape. From a biochemical perspective, it's also a great way to relieve stress because physical activity promotes the release of endorphins, hormones known to relieve pain, reduce stress and increase your sense of happiness and well-being.

2. *Talk about it.* One of the things that makes stress so damaging is that we often keep it to ourselves. Sometimes talking about how stressed you are (and why) with someone else is exactly what's needed to reduce it or at least understand it a little better - and that's half the battle. Your significant other, a family member, a friend or even a co-worker might be just what you need to get your stress (and how it's affecting you) out in the open. And once it's out in the open, it's easier to deal with. So talk about it with someone who not only provides compassion and understanding, but also has the capacity (and willingness) to tell you not just what you want to hear, but what you *need* to hear – even if it hurts a little. In the long run, honesty and openness will go a long way toward melting your stress away.

stress free lady - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark 3. *Distract yourself.* Stress doesn't have nearly as much power over you if you're not thinking about it. That can be a challenge, of course, especially when your every thought is focused on a particular stressor, but it's worth trying something – anything – to take your mind off your stress. This doesn't mean taking a walk, because if you take it alone, you'll likely obsess about your stress the whole time, and if you walk with a companion, you'll likely end up thinking and talking about it, too. True distraction means doing something that forces you to discard your stress to the

greatest extent possible – try a baseball game, a night at the movies (particularly pure action or comedy), or even a good book or board game at home. Anything that requires your mind to focus on something other than your stress.

4. *Deal with it.* Too often, people let stress build until a molehill becomes a mountain, occupying their every thought and affecting their every action. If they'd dealt with the issue (to the best of their ability) at the outset, it might never have gotten to that point. How do we "deal" with stress? It can involve any of these five suggestions, but there are definitely a whole bunch more. It boils down to a few simple rules: a) Recognize when you're stressed; don't ignore it or pretend you're "fine." b) Understand why you're stressed; identify the source of the stress and think carefully about why it's affecting you. c) Find a way to reduce the stress (or eliminate it entirely); if that's not immediately possible, at least find a way to manage it so it doesn't continue to build.

5. *Find the positives.* There's a silver lining to every stressful situation or circumstance, whether it's stress about your job or career, your relationship, your family life, your (lack of) free time, your finances or anything else. It might be difficult to see at first, but it's definitely there. Think of stress as an opportunity to explore creative solutions that will not only ease your stress, but also reduce the chance it will return. What's good about your job? Use the positives to maximize your experience with your current employer – or plant seeds for your next job. Relationship needs mending? Your stress is the motivator to sit down with your partner and discuss exactly what's going wrong (and what's going right).

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