

[IMAGE]

Recipe for a Lower-Stress Life

By Editorial Staff

Are you stressing out? Take a break and ponder this for a minute: How much of your life is played out in a stressful state? How much of your day – each and every day – is consumed by at least some level of frustration, irritation, desperation, anger and/or sadness; any and every emotion you can conjure up to define *stress*? For far too many people, stress is a constant negative force in their lives, and they carry it around from moment to moment, place to place, unable to do anything about it.

But that's not *you*; at least it won't be in a few minutes. Much like those extra pounds you could be carrying around, stress is a weight you can shed with the right attitude and the right actions. Here's the first three ingredients in your recipe for a lower-stress life:

Ingredient #1: More Organization. Do you like to keep your To-Do List in your head? That's really not a list; it's just random thoughts and ideas that are hard to keep track of and require far too much brainpower to keep organized. Or maybe you don't have a To-Do List at all; perhaps you make up your day as you go along, thinking you can avoid stress by avoiding a worrisome list of tasks and responsibilities.

But that won't work, because the average responsible person has things to accomplish. The way to accomplish those things with low stress is to make a list, prioritized by importance, and then cross items off as you complete them. In a sense, you're putting your sources of stress on a list, rather than keeping it all bottled up in your head. Cross off your stress, item by item, day by day, and reap the wellness benefits in the process.

Ingredient #2: More Laughter. How stressed can anyone really be when they're laughing? Try it if you're not sure. Situations that inspire laughter (joking with friends, watching comedy, etc.) reduce stress because they're generally not stressful situations. In fact, they usually remove us from stressful situations and give us a break from the madness. What's more, laughing actually creates physical changes that help reduce stress, including endorphin production, increased circulation, pain relief and muscle relaxation.

Ingredient #3: More Good Food. Your eating habits play a role in stress on both sides of the road. On the unhealthy side, "bad" foods can stimulate short- and long-term physical changes that increase stress /

anxiety. Fill up on a high-fat, greasy meal and then see whether you feel better or worse than before you started eating. Eat that way all the time, and your risk of health issues / disease increases, which certainly won't help your stress levels.

On the healthy side, eating "right" not only makes you feel good about yourself, but also promotes the production of various chemicals and hormones linked to relaxation (serotonin), while reducing production of others that increase stress (cortisol).

Your recipe for a lower-stress life starts with these three ingredients, but we haven't given you the complete recipe. Talk to your doctor about these and other simple strategies to reduce stress and enjoy a healthier, happier life in the process.

Page printed from:

http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=2530&no_paginate=true&no_b=true