

[IMAGE]

3 Modern Ways to Stress Less

By Editorial Staff

The stresses of our 21st century society require 21st century solutions, and we've got three great ones you can incorporate into your life immediately. Bear in mind these aren't the timeless "get more sleep," "get organized" or "find some 'you' time" stress-relief tips you've heard over the years (although those are all valuable, too); these are modern tips for the modern stresses that too often plague us. Here goes:

1. *It's OK to Isolate:* We mean in the social media sense, which has progressively dominated many people's lives on a moment-to-moment, day-after-day basis. We're not denying the benefits of social connection; in fact, research suggests people with strong social connections / relationships, particularly as they age, are generally healthier than people without such connections. But you can connect without staying connected 24-7 on your phone, tablet and/or laptop. The downside of social media is the ability to interact with anyone and everyone, which research also suggests can increase anxiety, depression and a need to constantly "know what's going on." Not to mention that social media, with all its "likes" and "loves" and comment windows, creates endless opportunity to judge and be judged. And all that can add up to stress – tons of stress.

2. *Hit the Great Outdoors:* Between our jobs and our technology, people just don't get outdoors enough, and it's stressing us out. Eight hours at a desk, a few hours in front of the TV and most of your day is gone without ever setting foot outdoors except to come and go. It's time to reduce stress by going outside more. Take a few deep breaths of fresh air; look around you; listen to the birds; feel the sunlight hit your face. Not so stressed anymore, right? We thought so. And let's not forget the power of sunlight – the biggest everyday source of vitamin D. Studies link inadequate vitamin D intake during the winter months (when many people don't get much, if any access to the sun due to the weather and shorter daylight hours) with depression symptoms ("the winter blues"). Depression and stress go hand and hand.

stress and relax - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark 3. *Schedule Enjoyment:* When was the last time you went somewhere besides work, the gym or the grocery store? OK, we're sure the list is longer than that, but the point is, you need to schedule enjoyment or you'll end up in the work-errands-home cycle into which so many people fall. Whether it's a night out with your significant other, a few days off work with a plan on what to do instead, or an actual vacation, schedule enjoyment and watch your stress levels drop.

After all, how stressed can you be when you're anticipating, low-stress (or no-stress) moments in your near future?

These aren't the only ways to reduce stress in our modern world, but they'll definitely get you started on a path to better health and wellness. So, what are you waiting for? Talk to your doctor about these and other great ways to kick stress to the curb and keep it there.

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