

Having a Hectic Day? Try These Guaranteed Stress Busters!

By Glenn Mueller
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If you are having a hectic day, you certainly aren't alone. There is no question about it -- the pace of modern life has gotten extremely intense. In fact, it seems as if that Old Chinese curse is still very much alive and well: "May you live in the most *interesting* of times."

Though a certain amount of stress can actually be a positive thing, internalizing too much of it will eventually destroy both your physical and mental health. But unless you are planning to move to Tibet and become a monk, it is likely that you will continue to experience high levels of stress in your everyday life. The good news is that you can learn to rise above it. In fact, we've got some guaranteed stress busters that can help you manage your anxiety before it starts to get the better of you.

From healthy eating to breathing exercises, these tips will help you take a step in the right direction. With a little practice, you can learn to find an inner sense of calm in the midst of life's most stressful storms.

Stress-Busters Guaranteed To Help You "Get A Grip:"

Grab A Healthy Snack: Feeding your body the [right kind of foods](#) is an essential way to manage stress. Processed foods and sugary candy bars will make you feel strung out. So instead of heading for the nearest vending machine at the first sign of trouble, come to the office with some healthy snacks like fruits and vegetables in hand. During hectic situations, people have a tendency to skip meals. Try to avoid this if at all possible.

Drink Some Green Tea: Just because it is called a "coffee break" doesn't mean you can't grab a mug of green tea or flavored water instead. If you are already feeling nervous energy coursing through those veins, you might want to keep an eye on your caffeine intake. When you gulp down too much java, it is bound to put you on edge. Green tea has less caffeine than coffee, so it might be a better alternative. And instead of resorting to sugary sodas later in the day, add a slice of lime or a lemon wedge to a glass of water. Your nerves will thank you.

Make Time For Exercise: When you don't think you have time to exercise is probably when your body actually needs it the most. Make it a priority to [fit exercise into your schedule](#) at least three to three to four times per week for at least 30 to 45 minutes per session. This will help keep you in shape and blow off steam.

Sleep On It: Listen to your mother and "get a good night's sleep." A proper amount of rest will make it easier to cope with whatever challenges life throws your way tomorrow. Most people need at least seven to eight hours of sleep every night in order to function at their best.

Unfortunately, anxiety is one of the leading causes of insomnia. If you find yourself tossing and turning at night, try using relaxing music to help reclaim those precious Z's. Get yourself into a regular sleep pattern by going to bed at the same time every night. Schedule your bedtime as you would an important appointment, and try to stick to it.

Just Breathe: As the lyrics to the popular song by Anna Nalick wisely advise, "Cradle your head in your hands and breathe... just breathe." As simple as it sounds, using deep-breathing exercises can be one of your greatest weapons in the war against stress. Step away from the stressful situation! Close your eyes and breathe deeply and quietly for a few minutes. A mere few minutes of concentrating on your breath can really help you to decompress.

Meditation: Believe it or not, meditating isn't just for Buddhist monks. Though the concept is foreign to most of us in the West, meditation has been scientifically proven to reduce anxiety and put us in touch with our inner strength. If you are new to meditation, you may want to work with a group. Many gyms, churches and civic centers offer meditation classes. If you can't find a meditation course in your area, there are plenty of guided meditations on DVD and CD for you to choose from.

Get Organized: Are you always trying to get "organized?" Do you frequently find yourself staying up all night on April 14 to finish your tax return? Well, those kind of situations are indeed very stressful, but they are also completely avoidable. Planning, scheduling and organizing your time may seem more stressful at first, but it will make your life much easier to manage in the long run.

Build A Support Network: Being in isolation actually intensifies your stress. Don't try to carry the weight of the world on your shoulders. Ask for help from your friends and relatives -- that's what they are there for. And, if you are looking to build your support network, why not join a support group? It is a great way to make new friends and meet people facing the same difficulties.

Give Yourself A Break: Be sure to give yourself little rewards and schedule ample time for fun. It is always easier to cope with stress when you have something to look forward to.

Pamper Yourself: Set aside at least one hour a week to pamper your body. Get a manicure or a pedicure -- or spend an hour soaking in a bubble bath. At least once a month, consider having some bodywork done, such as a massage, an exfoliation or another kind of spa treatment. Not only will you be able to soothe away your stress, but you'll also let your body know that you appreciate all it does for you.

Keep That Sense of Humor. As Oscar Wilde once said, "Life is too important to be taken seriously." Keeping a sense of humor about things and not taking yourself too seriously is one of the most effective coping strategies available. Remember that wherever there is laughter, there is still hope.

Seek Professional Help Sometimes all of these strategies may not be enough. If you have been suffering from panic attacks or experiencing high levels of anxiety that just won't go away, seeking professional help may be your best option. Remember, there is nothing to be ashamed about. It takes a strong person to admit he or she needs help. A professional will help you explore your options for making your life manageable again.