

stress busters

When we are under stress, a number of hormones are affected and our body can go into survival mode. This means that we typically see an increase in appetite and our bodies are driven to look for the foods that helped us survive as we evolved: high fat, sugary, starchy and salty options.

Here are some things that you can try to relieve stress:

Write it down

Write out your frustrations or make a list of things that need to get done. Sometimes seeing things on paper can help ease your tension or can help you feel more organized.

Colour

Adult colouring books can be a great outlet for creativity and can act as a relaxing outlet.

Stop and Smell the Roses

Smell can be a powerful sense - receptors in the nose send signals to the brain which can affect emotions and release of neurotransmitters (like the feel-good chemical, serotonin!)

Choose your favourite essential oil and either inhale deeply to the count of 10 or add a few drops to things like your pillow case, vents in car, your body wash or a diffuser.

Watch something funny

Having a good laugh can be a nice distraction and an easy way to change the mood.

Voice Journal

Create a voice memo on your smartphone. You can vent your frustrations by talking aloud about your stressors.

Listen to Music

Listening to music can be a great way to forget worries, replenish energy and improve mood!

Get Fresh Air

Changing your scenery can change perspective! Find a place that tends to be calming for you (i.e. porch, backyard, lake, forest) and visit when you need to recharge.

Call a friend or another social support

Friends can act as listeners, advisers, and companions. They can also be a source of acceptance and reassurance, lend a helping hand or a sympathetic ear, give good advice and guidance, and make you feel like you belong. Sometimes a good chat with a friend can make the world of difference to how we're feeling.

Experiment with Temperatures

While sitting, hold your breath for 30 seconds then lean forward and place an ice pack on your eyes/forehead. Do this several times - this strategy can help lower heart rate and blood pressure!

Get Active

Go for a power walk, do 20-30 jumping jacks, shoot some hoops or dance it out! Activity can be a great stress-reliever and can help you refocus. Activity can also cause your brain to release mood-boosting endorphins.

Take some Deep Breaths

Practice mindful breathing - inhale slowly and deeply for a count of 5, hold the breath for 5, then exhale slowly for a count of 5. Repeat this cycle 5 times. This is a great stress-buster that you can use anywhere!

Try Yoga

Yoga promotes relaxation by focusing on our mind, body and breathing. Take some time to watch a 20-minute yoga YouTube video.

Enjoy a Soak

Epsom salt baths can be a great way to relax - add 2 cups of epsom salts to warm bath water and soak for 20 minutes.

Muscle Relaxation

Try this:

- Sit or lie down comfortably and take a few breaths
- Do a quick body scan, noticing what is happening in your body at the moment
- Then, starting at the head, tighten all facial muscles and hold for 10, then release
- Then, move to the core, tightening all muscles for 10 and release
- Then, tighten both arms x 10 seconds and release
- Then, tighten both legs for 10 seconds, release
- You could hold your breath while tightening each section
- After this activity, notice if there are any changes in your body - repeat the process as needed

Challenge the Thought

What you tell yourself about a situation can affect how you feel and what you do. Ask yourself questions like: What would I tell my friend if they were in a similar situation? Have I confused a thought with a fact? How much of this is outside of my control?

Cozy Up with a Good Book

Reading can be a wonderful escape from the stress of everyday life. Find a book or magazine that piques your interest and set aside some time to read in a quiet place.