

Apologize for a mistake

Use affirmations. "I can handle this." "Everyone makes mistakes."

"We are all human." "Staying calm helps me solve problems."

Limit cell phone use to personal interactions after you leave work.

Review an item from your happy file—this is a file where you put birthday cards, thank you notes, letters of appreciation, photos, etc.

Stand up and stretch

Stretching muscles reduces the sensation of stress even when we can't do anything about the source of the stress.

Cut back on caffeine.

For fast acting relief, try slowing down. -Lily Tomlin

Find someone you are grateful for and thank them.

"Sometimes it's important to work for that pot of gold. But other times it's essential to take time off and to make sure that your most important decision in the day simply consists of choosing which color to slide down on the rainbow." – Douglas Pagels
These are the Gifts I'd Like to Give to You.

Learn to say no.

"Take a rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop." – Ovid

Do one thing at a time

"We are here on the planet only once, and might as well get a feel for the place." – Annie Dillard

Go for a brisk walk.

"We live longer than our forefathers, but we suffer more from a thousand artificial anxieties and cares. They fatigued only the muscles, we exhaust the finer strength of the nerves." – Edward George Bulwer-Lytton

Keep a journal of thoughts and feelings.

"People become attached to their burdens sometimes more than the burdens are attached to them. – Bernard Shaw

Take a deep breath and let it all out.

Stress and tension tighten muscles. Breathe by pushing out with stomach muscles to bring oxygen and energy into your body. Exhale and let go of the stress.

Count your blessings – make a list.

"Rest is not idleness, and to lie on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time." –J. Lubbock

Count to ten or 1000 before exploding.

Massage your target muscles. Recognize which muscle groups you tense up when feeling stress. Massage those muscles to break the stress-tension cycle.

Get up 15 minutes early.

“Stress is an ignorant state. It believes that everything is an emergency.” – Natalie Goldberg, *Wild Mind*

Go to work a different way.

“There is more to life than increasing its speed. -Mohandas K. Gandhi

Practice laughing out loud.

Work on your attitude. How you react to stress is determined by how you perceive a particular event. Reframe your response by acknowledging that the stress event is outside of you. You are the center and controller of your response.

Read something funny every day.

Think positively. Think about a success or past achievement.

Spend an evening without TV.

“How beautiful it is to do nothing, and to rest afterwards.” – Spanish Proverb

Read a good book and then pass it on to a friend.

Take a mental vacation. Visualize or gaze at a postcard or poster of somewhere you would like to be and feel safe.

Laugh at something you did.

Recite an anti-stress litany. “This too shall pass.” “Tomorrow is another day.”

Make time for play.

“I try to take one day at a time, but sometimes several days attack me at once. – Jennifer Yane.

Change your coffee break to a physical activity break

Get up and leave. If appropriate, leave the stressful situation for a little while. Go out to lunch. Walk around the block. The exercise and space gives you time to recover from the stress response.

Clasp your arms behind your back and stretch your shoulders.

Stretch your chest for better breathing. Press your shoulder blades together expanding your chest as you inhale. Relax as you exhale. Repeat 4-5 times.

Extras

Read a good book and then pass it on to a friend.

Look away. Focus on something at least 20 feet away to let eye muscles change tension.

“One of the symptoms of an approaching nervous breakdown is the belief that one’s work is terribly important. – Bertrand Russell

Yell or cry. If the environment is private and safe, emotional release can be healing.