



## Beat Stress Now! 10 Easy Tips

**“Never complain about your troubles; they are responsible for more than half of your income.”**

– Robert R. Updegraff

Everyone’s busy. Today many of us feel added pressure and stress with fax machines, cell phones, kids and co-workers. The average office worker fields 52 phone calls, 36 emails and 23 voice mails a day. Moreover, the holiday season, and the stress that sometimes comes with it, is fast approaching. Here are 10 quick and easy tips for managing stress. Please feel free to share them with your friends and colleagues.

- 1 Focus on your strengths, not on your weaknesses. Perfectionists, take note: the average American is 32 years old, married, laughs 15 times a day, and has 27 trillion fat cells. Nobody’s perfect. Beat stress by going easy on yourself. Focus on your strengths and work on your weaknesses. Don’t obsess over your weaknesses, because perfectionism often leads to procrastination.
- 2 Get up in the morning 30 minutes earlier. Start your day with solitude and more clarity by rising a half hour earlier than others in your household. Spend quiet time journaling, praying or meditating. Just begin by writing your thoughts, dreams, goals and fears. Start thinking about how to organize your day.
- 3 Break the worry habit. Ninety-five percent of what you worry about never happens. Ask yourself, “Even if the worst happened, what could I learn from this experience?” Have a Plan B just in case.
- 4 Spend time outdoors and out in nature. Especially in fall and winter when the days get shorter, it’s important to spend time outdoors every day in the natural daylight. Even if it’s gray and overcast, research shows that time spent in daylight, especially in the morning, helps reduce Seasonal Affective Disorder or “SAD.” Where I live in the Pacific Northwest, I can actually notice a positive shift in my mood and that of others when late spring arrives and it is light until almost 9:00 p.m.
- 5 Remember the formula  $E + R = O$ . Event + (your) Reaction = Outcome. You can’t always control the events or outside circumstances around you, but you CAN control how you react. This isn’t exactly a new concept, but sometimes we need to be reminded of it. Most of us spend more time worrying

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about the things beyond our control. I conducted a speaking engagement recently in Seattle on “Dealing with Difficult People.” I reminded everyone of the importance that their response plays in determining their outcomes.

- 6 Laughter is a serious business! Laugh to reduce stress. It’s a well-known fact that laughter helps reduce stress and strengthens the immune system. Laughter IS the best medicine. It gets those endorphins or “feel-good” hormones into the brain and elevates your mood.
- 7 Don’t overreact when dealing with difficult people – especially antagonists. Antagonists, otherwise known as “pot stirrers,” often harbor a desire for dissent. They’re looking to purposely rattle your cage, ruffle your feathers, and get you to say something you’ll regret. As Zig Ziglar once said, “No one can get your goat if they don’t know where it’s tied up.”
- 8 Reward yourself for a job well done. Indulge in a massage, manicure or pedicure. Recently I had the glorious pleasure of staying at the Phoenician Hotel in Scottsdale, Arizona. Splurging on an hour-plus massage worked wonders! Not to mention lying out by the pool enjoying the beautiful desert scenery of Camelback Mountain, and later, Sedona.
- 9 Check your “adult” at the door. Act like a kid again! Play, run, engage in a favorite sport or hobby like golf, tennis, or hanging out with your children at the park. Make sure to have a date night with your spouse or significant other. Take a day off and play at the beach doing something you haven’t done in years, like playing Frisbee or building sand castles.
- 10 Cultivate an attitude of gratitude. List 10 things you’re grateful to have in your life. Revisit and appreciate the simplest of pleasures. Sip your favorite cup of gourmet coffee. Sit outside in the springtime in the garden of a friend’s house. If you live near the coast, enjoy the sunset there. Appreciate the feeling of being more energized after a workout. Be grateful for your health.

Decide today to make a commitment to do one activity that will reduce stress and maximize success. Do it now. What you do in the present determines your future. Enjoy! **N**

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