

10 Ways to De-Stress

Chill Out – It’s Easier Than You Think

By: Mia Simonsen

It’s a fact of life that everyone confronts stressful situations at one point or another. Maybe it’s a big test, a first date, a crucial debate. But some people seem to be stressed 24/7, while others seem to glide through life. So what’s their secret?

It’s all about how you *react* to stress that makes all the difference. If you can stay calm and centered and realize that some things are just out of your control, then you’ll feel less stressed out. You can also avoid a lot of stress if you simplify your life, slow down, learn to manage your time, and breathe. Read on to learn 10 simple ways you can stop being a mess and de-stress.

10 Best Ways to De-stress

1. **GRRRR:** *Avoid Stressful Situations and Confrontations*

If you find yourself in a stressful situation or confrontation, try to take yourself out of the equation. Don’t hang out with people who make you uncomfortable or who are confrontational. There are plenty of people in this world to be friends with. You don’t have to try to please them all. And if someone tries to pressure you to do things that you don’t want to do or bullies you, it’s OK to ask for help from a teacher, parent or counselor. You don’t have to suffer in silence.

2. **IT’S ALL SMALL STUFF:** *Set Realistic Goals and Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff*

There are only 24 hours in a day and a third of that time you need your ZZZs, so set realistic goals that you can achieve. Don’t sweat the small stuff. If you feel overwhelmed and on circuit overload, take a look at your schedule and see what you can cut out to ease your workload.

3. **FIRST THINGS FIRST:** *Set Priorities*

Going to school is not negotiable. But after-school activities and sports are. So, if you feel like you can’t keep up with your schoolwork, then you’ll have to decide what activities mean the most to you and let go of things that are keeping you from doing your homework or studying. Even if you don’t want to drop a sport, you have to realize that your coach will not let you stay on the team if your grades are too low.

4. **KNOW YOUR STUFF:** *Be Prepared*

It’s survival of the fittest, so whoever is the most prepared will succeed. If you know your material and have studied enough, you’ll do well on exams. If you eat well, get enough sleep and are fit, you’ll do better in sports. But if you wing it and think that you can make do with little preparation, you’re fooling yourself. Whether you’re in school or in the workforce, you need to be one step ahead of the game to do well. It’s a competitive world so make sure you’re not caught off guard.

5. TAKE IT EASY: *Relaxation Techniques*

If you're feeling stressed, breathing exercises, yoga, meditation, stretching and Tai Chi are some great relaxation techniques that can help you lower your blood pressure, heart rate, and calm your mind. Pop in a yoga or meditation DVD and take your mind away from your worries. When you're done, you'll be much more relaxed and ready to tackle whatever comes your way with a clear mind.

6. FIND AN OUTLET: *Talk to a Mentor or Guidance Counselor*

If you are having a problem deciding which classes to take, where to apply for college, or just need someone to talk you, find a mentor, pastor, or guidance counselor who can help you. There's no sense worrying about things all by yourself when you can bounce ideas off someone with more experience in dealing with teachers, colleges, and life in general.

7. WATER WORKS: *Take a Hot Bath or Shower*

There's nothing like a relaxing hot bath or shower. Even if it's only for a few minutes, you can practice doing some relaxation techniques while soaking in a tub or standing in a steaming hot shower. It can be as simple as concentrating on your breathing and meditating. Or you can just focus on the water, relaxing your muscles and washing away your stress.

8. TUNING IN: *Listen to Music or Do a Hobby That You Love*

If you need to take a break, listen to some music, paint, dance, sing, or play an instrument. Everyone needs to take a break from studying sometime, so doing something that you really love to do is a great way to recharge your batteries and unwind.

9. BURN BABY BURN: *Blow off Steam Through Exercise*

Exercise is a great way to blow off steam. Do whatever exercise you like – walking, jogging, swimming or skateboarding. Try to make time to exercise often so it's part of your daily routine. Your body and your mind will thank you for it.

10. WRITE ON: *Journal*

Journaling is an excellent way to put your worries down on paper. Just writing down what you're feeling can be therapeutic. Check out the online Journal in your My Page. That way you don't have to lie in bed thinking about everything that's stressing you out because you've already written it down in your journal. Every day, try to write down one or two things that you like about your life or yourself to keep things in perspective. No matter how horrible or stressful your life may be, there will always be one nice thing that you can be thankful for each day (the sunshine, your dog, your parents, a best friend, etc.)

This article has been reviewed by BodiMojo expert Tara Cousineau, Ph.D.