

SELF-HELP FOR STRESS RELIEF

tip sheet - stress relief

Hot under the collar? Getting totally stressed out? Think you might need a therapist, but aren't sure? Here are a number of things to try first to soothe yourself.

Self-care skills:

- Get enough rest. Limit caffeine intake during the day. Stretch or do yoga poses before bedtime for good quality sleep.
- Get moving. Exercise — even light exercise — helps relieve stress, boosts neurotransmitters, reduces the stress hormone cortisol, and increases circulation. And take it outdoors — the natural sunlight helps elevate mood.
- Eat a balanced diet with protein and fiber. High sugar/carbohydrate intake makes your blood sugar spike, giving a temporary mood boost — before it drops into your socks, creating mood ups and downs.

Mindfulness techniques:

- Stop. Take a deep breath, maybe close your eyes. Take a moment just for yourself, and pay attention to you. You deserve it.
- Do just One Thing at a Time. Worry about one thing at a time. Focus on the immediate issue and tune out those things over which you have no control.
- Spend time with nature. Notice the natural environment, or a small part of it. The world is a big place. Take a walk, look at the trees, gaze at the stars. Get some perspective.
- Meditate. Even if it's for five minutes. If you prefer, download a guided meditation, like Headspace or Calm.

Cognitive techniques:

- Recall a time when you have overcome a difficult situation. Remind yourself and reflect on past successes. Reconnect with your resilience.
- Tell yourself to Stop! self-critical and self-doubting thoughts and pejorative self-descriptions. These are abusive. Change the subject. Instead,
- Talk to yourself as you would to a good friend: positively, encouragingly, lovingly.

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