

Lifestyle Medicine: Tools for Promoting Healthy Change
June 26, 2009 ♦ Boston, MA

38 Stress Busters

Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital
(http://www.mbmi.org/basics/mstress_SB.asp)

1. Start off your day with breakfast.
2. Occasionally change your routine by meeting a friend or co-worker for breakfast - allow time to relax and enjoy it.
3. Find some time during the day to meditate or listen to a relaxation CD.
4. Instead of drinking coffee all day, switch to fruit juice.
5. Organize your work - set priorities.
6. Don't try to be perfect. Don't feel like you must do everything.
7. Avoid trying to do two or three or more things at a time.
8. Develop a support network.
9. If possible, reduce the noise level in your environment.
10. Always take a lunch break (preferably not at your desk).
11. Optimize your health with good nutrition, sleep and rest.
12. Get regular exercise.
13. Celebrate birthdays and other holidays. Turn more events into special occasions.
14. Look at unavoidable stress as an avenue for growth and change.
15. Avoid people who are "stress carriers."
16. Avoid people who are "negaholics."
17. Don't watch the 11 p.m. news.
18. Give yourself praise and positive strokes.

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19. Develop a variety of resources for gratification in your life, whether it's family, friends, hobbies, interests, special weekends or vacations.
20. Treat yourself to "new and good things."
21. Be assertive. Learn to express your needs and differences, to make requests, and to say "no" constructively.
22. Seek out the emotional resources available to you- co-workers, spouse, friends and family.
23. Don't be afraid to ask questions or to ask for help.
24. Allow extra time to get to appointments.
25. Take deep breaths when you feel stressed.
26. Try to find something funny in a difficult situation.
27. Find ways to protect yourself...take an occasional "mental health day."
28. Adopt a pet.
29. Take a mindful walk.
30. Understand that we do not all see or do things in the same way.
31. Practice mindfulness - learn to live in the moment.
32. Become a less aggressive driver.
33. Show kindness and consideration: Open a door for someone, pick up litter, etc.
34. When stressed, ask yourself "Is this really important?" and "Will this really matter a year from now?"
35. Resist the urge to judge or criticize.
36. Become a better listener.
37. Be flexible with change - things don't always go as we planned.
38. If religious, pray; speak to God, a higher power, or your inner guide.