

5 WAYS TO

Reduce Stress

IN A DAY



What is stress?

Before you can deal with stress it's good to know what it is.

So, first off, stress is defined as follows:

1. pressure or tension exerted on a material object.
2. a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances.

It comes from the word “distress”, the origin of which is *dis+stringere* “to bind tight”.

Do feel like you're being “bound tight”? !

Here are 5 actions you can take to reduce stress in **one day**.

1. Go for a walk

This may sound incredibly simple and you might think it isn't worth it but believe me it works!

The purpose of this walk isn't to exercise the body or get more oxygen – although they both help.

No, the purpose of the walk is to get your attention out, to get your attention off the stressful situation you're in.

The way to do this is to walk outside and as you walk, look around you. Don't just stare at the pavement at your feet or blankly at the space in front of you. That's no different then sitting at home or at your desk and “thinking”.

Sometimes it takes a few walks to fully get the attention out and reap the full benefit of this but even if you only have 10 minutes to go for a walk it helps.

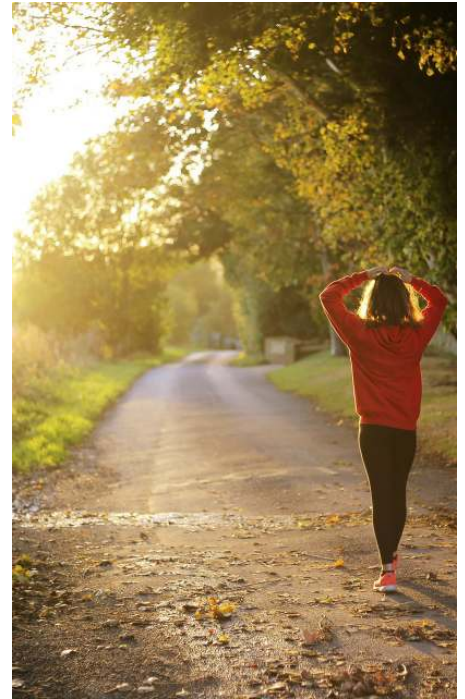
ACTION POINT:

Go out for a walk for at least 10 minutes, preferably 20-30 minutes.

Look at your surroundings. Look at a car on the road. Look at a fence. Look at a wall. Look at a tree. Whatever is in your environment, look at it.

If you find your attention going back onto whatever it is that's causing you to feel stressed or anxious just look out at something – the flowers, the grass etc.

When you feel better, turn around and go back to your point of origin.



2. Locate the Cause of Stress

Now we've looked at what the word means, it's time to look at what is causing you stress.

It's easy to say "I feel stressed" or "everything is so stressful". But if you take a closer look at it you should be able to see there are specific things causing the stress.

And once you've named the sources of stress it should make you feel more in control.

Here are some examples:

- can't pay the bills
- overloaded with work
- can't find a job
- trying to lose weight
- relationship problems
- losing your job
- taking care of an elderly relative

And so on. Only you can say what it is that is causing you stress.

ACTION POINT:

Make a list of the things that are causing you stress. Write down anything that you come up with.

This may be one main thing or it could be a number of different things. If there are a number of things then once you've written them down put a number next to them with 1 being the biggest cause of the stress.

3. Stop Multi-tasking

Stress can be caused by trying to do many things at the same time.

Multi-tasking is often applauded but it's not always the best thing. By trying to do many things at the same time you can make mistakes, you don't give each item the attention it deserves and it runs you down.

By doing one thing at a time you get the chance to concentrate on what you're doing and it's a lot less stressful.

A mother with young children is nearly always juggling many things at the same time! At work have you ever found yourself in the middle of writing an email, you get a text message, the phone rings and someone tries to grab your attention on Messenger? If you jump from one to the other and keep answering the messages you're going to forget what you were doing originally and feel a little under stress!

Sometimes it *is* necessary to do more than 1 thing at a time depending on your situation but try to limit this.



ACTION POINT:

For at least 15 minutes just do 1 thing at a time. If you're writing an email and a message pops up, finish writing the email. If you're writing a letter, don't check your email until you've finished. If you're cooking a meal don't also put the laundry on and wash the dishes. You get the idea!

If you can do it for more than 15 minutes then do so.

4. Listen to Music

Listening to music is one of the best ways of de-stressing. It helps lighten your mood and can make you feel good.

You know how it is when one of your favourite old songs comes on the radio and you start to sing along and remember how you felt when you used to listen to that song?

Music can relax you, it can wake you up, it can invigorate you, it can distract you. All of these things can help relief stress.

ACTION POINT:

Listen to music for a minimum of 5 minutes and do nothing else (other than dance or sing). Really LISTEN to the music.

Choose your favourite music whether that's relaxing classical music or hard-hitting heavy metal – whatever it is that makes you feel good!



5. Breathing

We take it for granted that we breath in and out – it's part of the involuntary systems of the body i.e. it works by itself.

Did you know that oxygen changes food and liquid into energy? Therefore the less oxygen you have, the less energy you will have.

When you're out and about you get plenty of oxygen. Just the process of moving around forces the body to take in more oxygen. And there is the added advantage of there being plenty of oxygen outside. But what about inside?

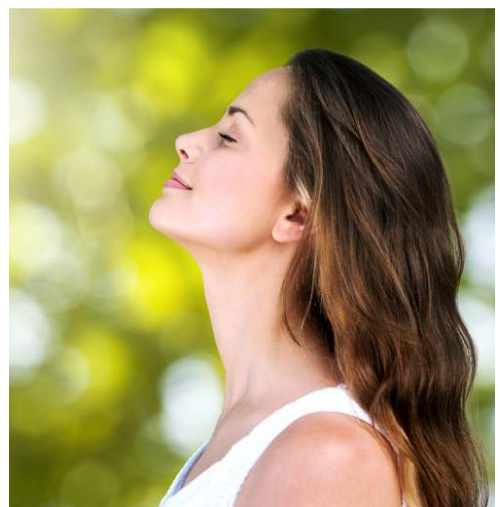
A lot of people spend many hours cooped up inside a building, whether that's at work or at home. Oxygen is available but it's not the same as the oxygen in the outside air and there's less of it.

Have you ever monitored your breathing when you're sitting concentrating on something like the TV or a computer or writing something or even painting a picture? Try it some time – you might be surprised at how shallow your breaths are.

When we're stressed breathing can become shallow. By breathing more deeply your heart rate slows down, more oxygen gets into the blood stream and sends a message to the brain to relax. It also increases a group of hormones called endorphins which helps you to relax.

ACTION POINT:

Take a moment and concentrate on your breathing. You can either breathe in deeply through your nose and then out through your mouth or follow the 4-7-8 breathing method.



This involves breathing in through your nose for a count of 4, holding for a count of 7 and breathing out through your mouth for a count of 8. Repeat this a few times to increase your oxygen intake.

Repeat this 3 or 5 times in the day and especially when you're feeling really stressed.

If you enjoyed this you might be interested in expanding on it on our
10 Day Stress Detox Course.

One lesson per day provides you with a new way to reduce stress. After 10 days you should feel a lot less stressed!

Find out more here:

www.lifeimprovement.co.uk/life-training/course/10-day-stress-detox/