

50 FUN AND EXCITING WAYS TO DE-STRESS AND LIVE LIFE TO THE FULLEST



DONNA HOFFMAN, Ph.D.

There are many FUN techniques and resources that can quickly reduce your stress and allow you to enjoy life to its fullest. Some of the tips have [LINKS](#) for additional information and fun.

1. **Slow down** - Slow down your movements. People, who are anxious, try to do things faster. Slow it down.

SLOW DOWN

2. **Laugh Yourself Silly** - Laughing releases endorphins (the feel good chemicals). It also protects the heart by increasing blood flow. It boosts the immune system and also relieves physical tension and stress. . Watch funny movies and laugh yourself silly. Check my blog post article for a laughing good read: Laugh Yourself Silly

3. **Exercise** - Exercise can help relax you and helps improve mood and let go of tension. It also allows you to sleep deeper and feel relaxed.



en.wikipedia.org

4. **Let go of the past** - You can't change what happened yesterday. Focus on the here and now.

5. **Stop drinking caffeinated beverages**- Caffeine makes anxiety worse. ♥♥ Try a smoothie or a fresh peppermint lemonade

6. **Meditate** - When anxious or overwhelmed, meditation can be very beneficial. It reduces stress by helping you switch off worries. Meditation has numerous health benefits such as lowering anxiety and decreasing the risks of heart disease. ♥♥This meditation CD is awesome. It is called Relaxation Suite and I love the Sand Dance track.



Grand Velas, Puerto Vallarta

7. **Yoga** - Sign up with an instructor or do it on your own. Yoga has many health benefits such as reducing stress and anxiety. It brings peacefulness of body and mind and helps you relax. ♥♥ Get a colorful mat at [Yoga Outlet.com](http://YogaOutlet.com)

8. **Eat chocolate** - Chocolate helps regulate blood pressure and blood sugar levels. It provides a calming effect on your body and elevates mood. It also reduces tension and anxiety. Here is a rare example of how something so delicious can be so good for you. ♥♥ Sink a bite into some of these at Ghirardelli's.



Ghirardelli.com

9. **Obtain a massage** - Studies have shown massage is beneficial for fighting stress. It can also improve your body image. Studies have shown that obtaining a massage can be extremely beneficial for fighting stress. It can also provide overall well-being. ♥♥ No time to get a professional massage? Try the Omni Massage Roller to ease aching muscles.

10. **Get a pet** - Pets can give you great social support. They also provide unconditional love. They even can help in reducing your stress. In fact, studies have shown that people experience less stress with their pets than with a friend or family member. This is probably because they don't judge us.



Commons.Wikimedia.org

11. **Listen to music** - Music is known as the language of the soul and has benefits to our overall health and well-being. Music can reduce pain because listening to music releases endorphins. It also reduces stress and cardiovascular problems because listening reduces your heart rate and blood pressure. Studies have also shown it to help in getting a good night's sleep. ♥♥ Listen to the soothing sounds of A Secret Garden or the tunes from Michael Bolton.



Pixabay.com

12. **Practice gratitude** - . Think of all the things you are grateful for. It can be as simple as being grateful for the food you ate for lunch today or the great book you couldn't put down this past weekend. When you are grateful for all you have, more abundance and good things come your way. Here is an article on gratitude from my blog post.

13. **Drink green tea** - Green tea is full of healthy antioxidants. It improves mood and reduces anxiety. ♥♥ Buy some green tea at Teavana

14. **Social support** - This is one of the best remedies for stress. Having a network of friends and family can go a long way to help an individual cope with life's major stressors.

15. **Learn to see the good in any situation** - Rather than seeing the glass half empty, see it as half full.

16. **Learn to breathe deeply and slowly** - When breathing deeply, mental clarity improves and there is better decision-making. It instantly calms you down and can be done anywhere, anytime.

17. **Drink chamomile tea** -Chamomile tea is great as a relaxant and helps you sleep as well. ♥♥ The finest chamomile flowers in the world can be found at Adagio Teas.

18. **Try to avoid processed foods** - Processed foods, such as sugar, white flour products, artificial sweeteners, junk foods, fast food, and food that contain preservatives. The high amount of salt in processed foods increase blood pressure, putting stress on the body. Too much sugar robs the body of essential nutrients and nutrition deficiencies lead to anxiety. Artificial sweeteners are also bad as they can also cause anxiety. Try to avoid these types of food if at all possible.



Pixabay.com

9. **Unplug for at least 30 minutes a day** - Unplug all your electronic devices, phone, iPad, iPhone, laptop, TV, and Kindle. We have become accustomed to answering emails, Twitter, and Facebook messages as soon as we receive them. Take a break.

20. **Take an occasional day off from work** - Breaking up the routine and getting things done, that you would normally do on the weekend, can free up the weekend and allow you to relax.

21. **Change your environment** - By taking time away from your usual environment, such as a vacation or a weekend trip, you get to experience new sensations and feelings. This helps change your negative thought patterns and allows you to feel refreshed.



Pixabay.com

22. **Change your routine** - The same routine day in and day out can make you feel stuck and overwhelmed. Add something different to your routine each day, such as taking a walk down a different path, call a different friend for lunch, learn a new hobby, or take a class.

23. **Surround yourself with lavender-** Lavender reduces anxiety and causes relaxation. It is great for soothing the nerves.



Pixabay.com

24. **Write in a journal-** Journaling has a positive impact on your physical well-being. Writing about stressful events allows you to put them in perspective and come to terms with them. It reduces their impact on your physical and mental health.

25. **Play music and cook something wonderful** - Music is a great stress reliever. Put on some great music and turn cooking into a fun activity. This is a great way to relax and have a great meal as well. ♥♥ Try cooking up spaghetti and meat sauce while listening to The Tenors. Great stuff.



en.wikipedia.org

26. **Do a puzzle** - This is great for reducing stress and anxiety because it relaxes you and calms your mind at the same time. ♥♥ See if you can make the pieces fit at Serious Puzzles. They have 1000's of perfect puzzles.

27. **Visit a spa**- Spas can be luxurious and relaxing. The soothing music, gentle massage, warm saunas, and hot tubs can ease the tension in your body and help you relax. It will help you mentally and physically loosen up. Spending time at a spa puts you in a quiet space where you can reflect on being in the present at the moment. For some, this is where their greatest moments of inspiration occur. ♥♥ Visit the Spa at the Hotel Hershey in Hershey Pennsylvania. Indulge in a whipped chocolate bath, a chocolate bean polish, or a chocolate fondue wrap.

28. **Dance** - Aside from the obvious benefits to our physical well-being, dancing reduces stress and tension. It also provides for an overall sense of well-being. It is known to retard the aging problems and helps elevate our mood by raising endorphin levels. Through exercise, dancing is a great stress reliever.

29. **Read a good book** - Leave your anxiety behind and take yourself to another place and time. Visit Cleopatra or Henry the VIII. Maybe you want to take ride on the Orient Express or spend time with Mr. Darcy at Pemberly. The places and times are endless. ♥♥ Visit Mr. Darcy at Pemberly in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice.



Pixabay.com

30. **Socialize with friends** - Socializing is very good for relaxation. Invite a friend to the movies, for a walk, or for a game of chess.

31. **De-clutter your life and home** - Say goodbye to the negative people in your life and rid your home of clutter. These things create stress in your life and by removing them, you will feel less stressed and more relaxed. ♥♥ Here's a marvelous book to de-clutter your home and life: Feng Shui Your Life.

32. **Squeeze a ball** - Purchase a squeeze ball. This is useful at work, if you don't have time to take a walk. It provides a physical release that will help you let go of tension. ♥♥ Here are some cute squeeze balls from Amazon.com Looks like fun.

Create a worry period - Choose a set time to worry each day, but not before bedtime because you don't want to feel anxious and have it interfere with sleep. As an example, you might set time out each day to worry from 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. If an anxious thought comes to mind before or after this worry time, write it down, but postpone it to the worry period. By being able to postpone your thoughts, you'll begin to realize you have more control over your worrying than you think.

34. **Watch a sunrise or sunset** - Set time out to enjoy the world around you. When you see the beauty of what is out there, things you have taken for granted suddenly appear more colorful and vibrant. The things you thought so important, suddenly don't seem so important after all.



Commons.Wikimedia.org

35. **Hug someone**- A hug is known as universal medicine. It is how we handshake from the heart (*Anonymous*). It reduces heart disease, diminishes stress, and promotes longevity. You should give at least 4 hugs each day.

36. **Volunteer for a charity** - Helping others takes the focus off of you, which is an important step in overcoming anxiety. Volunteering and helping others allows you to feel good about yourself.

37. **Visualize** - Picture a calm scene. Perhaps it is walking on the beach or in a beautiful grassy meadow. Make your vision as detailed as possible and enjoy the scene. Anything you wish can happen in your visualization.

38. **Do one thing at a time** - Stop multitasking. Only do one thing at a time. This will enable you to complete a task without undue stress and allow you to complete it more efficiently.

39. **Learn how to say no** - Most of us have trouble saying no. We want to be well-liked, but saying no is not selfish. In fact, always saying yes is not healthy. It creates stress. Focus on what matters most and let go of the guilt. Come right out and say the word "no" and don't be afraid of it. Saying no sometimes is important. It will reduce your stress and simplify your life.

40. **Let go of anger** - Everyone has been hurt at one time or another by actions or words from another individual, leaving you with anger. Letting go of anger and learning to forgive can be of great physical and emotional benefit. Forgiveness is letting go of the past. As T.D. Jakes says, "Unforgiveness unchecked becomes a cancer in the soul". Forgiveness leads to less anxiety, stress, and fewer symptoms of depression. ♥♥ TD Jakes has a great book out called "Let It Go: Forgive So You Can Be Forgiven".

41. **Eat your favorite food** - Eating your comfort foods can make you feel nostalgic and will often have you taking a trip down memory lane to the good times, letting you forget about your worries and anxieties in the present moment.

42. **Stay in the present** - Most of our time is spent in the future or the past causing life to pass us by. Staying in the present moment reduces stress. Trying to stay in the present may be difficult at first as your mind wants to wander to the past or the future. If you find your mind wandering that's okay. Just acknowledge it and then gently bring your mind back to the present. Being mindful as this is called has many health benefits, including reducing stress and anxiety. ♥♥ Here is a great book from Jon Kabat-Zinn on mindfulness.

43. **Take a bath** - Relax in the tub while listening to music. Add your favorite bubble bath or essential oil. You not only will feel fresh, but fatigue and stress will disappear. A nice soak for 10 minutes can also improve heart health. In addition, you will also get the added benefits that music provides as well. ♥♥ Try Kneipp Lavender and Vanilla Foaming Bath. It is heavenly.

44. **Get enough sleep** - Most people need 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night. Make sure to get extra sleep during periods of increased stress. Sleep promotes physical health, longevity, and emotional well-being.

Get Your Zzz's.....

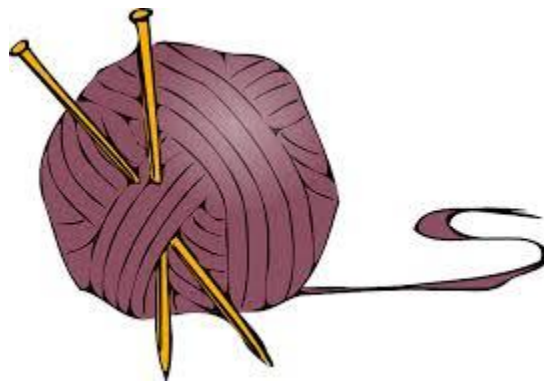
45. **Watch aquarium fish** - Studies have shown that gazing at aquarium fish lowers stress and blood pressure. Even watching a video of aquarium fish sports similar benefits.

46. **Cut down on some of your commitments** - Sometimes our commitments can cause us to feel overwhelmed and stressful. Our lives can feel unbalanced. Reduce some of the commitments to where you feel life is more manageable.

47. **Visit a country inn** - Take a beautiful drive or hop on a plane and visit the country. There are some beautiful country inns where you can get away from it all and enjoy the ambiance, great food, and wonderful activities. What a nice venue to let go of stress and anxiety. Just be careful, you might not want to come home. ♥♥ Take your Mr. Darcy and head for one of the ten most romantic inns. Indulge yourself!

48. **Take a brisk walk** - Walking is an excellent stress reducer and is at the top of the list. Just surrounded by nature can have a calming effect. It also reduces tension and makes one feel energized. If weather is an issue, take a walk in an indoor mall.

49. **Find a hobby** - Hobbies can be a wonderful way of connecting with others. Taking up a hobby not only sharpens the mind, but can reduce stress and anxiety, and even lower blood pressure. In fact, hobbies that engage the mind have been known to delay the onset of Alzheimer's.



Pixaby.com

50. **Re-label your anxiety** - Sometimes just the symptoms of anxiety, increased heartbeat and those butterflies in the stomach can be frightening and take on a life of their own, adding more anxiety. Instead of going with the "what if's" that can escalate the anxiety, reframe your anxiety. Put a new label on it, such as excitement. For example, if I were fearful while driving my car down the road because I am anticipating or in the throes of an anxiety or panic attack, I could re-label it and say that I am not feeling panic, but excitement. I am excited because I am going to meet my favorite person for lunch. Think about it, what is the difference in the physiological symptoms of fear and excitement? In both instances, your heart is beating fast and you have butterflies in your stomach. So reframe it and the anxiety will lessen. You may not be going to have lunch with a friend, but by making it a "what if" of excitement instead of a "what if" of anxiety, it will go a long way to make you less fearful of the symptoms.

Hope you are enjoying these great and fun ways to reduce your stress and anxiety. Please visit at <http://www.drdonnahoffman.com> for other great tips and to look over our programs and services that can help you create the life you desire.

Cover Photo
Gopixpic.com

Donna Hoffman, Ph.D.
Opening Up Endless Possibilities
July 2017