

Stress and Anxiety

1. Manage Your Stress Levels

- a. Just admitting that you are feeling more stressed than you can cope with is a good start.
- b. Find something that helps you to unwind.
- c. This could be listening to soothing music, watching a movie that makes you laugh or taking a walk in nature.
- d. Whatever it is, it is important for you to do it, so *make* the time to do this and you will see a gradual lessening in your stress levels.

2. Breathe!

- a. Anxiety really affects how we breathe.
- b. During an anxiety attack, we breathe faster and more shallowly.
- c. As soon as you realize that your breathing is speeding up, focus on it and force yourself to take a few slow, deep breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- d. This may take a few tries but stick with it.
- e. Your breathing will eventually slow and deepen and your anxiety level will start to drop.

3. See your way out...

- a. Technique called visualization.
- b. 'Seeing' yourself in another setting and another state.
- c. The next time you start to feel anxious, imagine yourself feeling totally relaxed in a safe, relaxing place – such as lying in the sun on a beautiful tropical beach, or relaxing in a deep, warm bubble bath.
- d. It's a good idea to practice your visualization at a time when you're not feeling anxious so that it is easy to summon your image when you are.

4. Learn to Meditate

- a. One of the best ways to relax.
- b. If you are new to meditation why not buy an audio CD of a 'guided' meditation.
- c. This is one where a voice tells you what to do, step by step. It is usually spoken over a background of soothing music or sounds, such as waves.
- d. Try it out at a time when you know you're not going to be disturbed. Take the phone off the hook and enjoy! For maximum benefit, try and fit meditation into your daily life. Even ten minutes before you get out of bed in the morning will bring huge results.

5. Relax your body

- a. If we feel anxious in our mind – our body follows.
- b. Anxiety tenses the muscles so that you are ready to run!
- c. Once the feelings of anxiety have gone, the body may still be tensed and on 'red alert'.
- d. Make it part of your routine to do something to relax those tense muscles.
- e. This could be as simple as taking a bubble bath – which would also help you with visualizing that form of relaxation when required!

6. Sleep well...

- a. Sleep is essential to help us to function properly.
- b. If you are prone to anxiety, that is the last thing that you need.
- c. If you are suffering from a lack of sleep due to anxiety then it becomes doubly important to beat this.

7. Eat properly

- a. It's important to eat a healthy, balanced diet to help your body to function correctly.
- b. Over eating or over indulging in sugary snacks can cause a consequent drop in blood sugar which can make you feel sluggish, lethargic and then miserable.
- c. Not eating enough can make you lightheaded, jittery and anxious.

8. Exercise

- a. Going for a short walk a few times a week can bring major changes to how you feel.
- b. Walking for 30 minutes three times a week helps your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

9. Don't suffer alone

- a. Confide in family and friends. You might be surprised at how supportive they are.
- b. If you really don't wish to share how you feel, look online for support groups where you can read what other people write.