



Stress – The Silent Threat

When people refer to the “good old days”, when life seemed to be slower and less complicated, it is difficult to disagree with them. Today, life is hectic and fast-paced. People work too many hours; are chauffeurs for their children, who are involved in multiple activities; have a hard time leaving their computers, cell phones, and blackberry’s behind; and never seem to have time for themselves. Add to this the state of the economy, the plunge of the housing market, the volatility of the stock market, and other external circumstances. It’s easy to see how one can be overstressed.

Although some stress is normal, chronic stress can result in physical ailments, emotional problems, or behavioral issues. Symptoms can range from headaches, skin rashes, and high blood pressure to sleep disturbances, burnout, and depression. Left untreated, chronic stress can have severe consequences.

If you are feeling stressed, here are some steps you can take to reduce your stress level. Below are ten ideas that may help you to combat the stress in your life:

1. Although stress can have many symptoms, the real culprit could be a medical problem. Visit your doctor to rule out any physical problems. Knowing that you are physically healthy can reduce stress.
2. Slow down. Talk, think, walk, move, and drive slower. If you condition your body and mind to slow down, you’d be amazed at how much calmer you’ll be.
3. Determine what your priorities are and let go of the non-priorities. What can you set aside or eliminate from your life so your focus is only on your priorities? You can decrease your stress level by doing less, allowing more time and energy for the most important items.
4. Learn how to say “no.” This may be hard at first, especially if you are generally a “yes” person. However, saying no helps you to set limits, aiding you and those around you to understand that you can’t be everything to everyone.
5. Find more time for yourself. Alone time, without interruptions, can refresh and rejuvenate your body, mind, and soul.
6. Eat healthier foods. When people are stressed, they often overeat, or eat junk food. Eating poorly can make one feel sluggish, resulting in a decreased energy level. Not having the energy to tackle the day’s activities can be stressful.
7. Get a good night’s sleep. You’ll feel much more refreshed in the morning and ready for the day’s activities and challenges.

8. Do something special for yourself. For all that you do, you need to reward yourself from time to time. Get a massage, visit our favorite restaurant, or take a vacation.
9. Spend more time with people you love and those who love you unconditionally. When there is unconditional love, you feel less stress, as you can be your true self.
10. Try to find the humor in a stressful situation, and then laugh about it. There is no better medicine for stress than laughter.

Of course, the above list is only a start. There are many other ways to reduce stress in your life. Do what feels and works best for you. To quote Marcus Aurelius, “If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself but to your own estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment.”

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