



# Stress & Relaxation

## Reduce Micro Stress

We have experience many micro stressors throughout our days that alert our brains to possible dangers. The more you have the more stressed you may feel. To the right are some examples of micro stressors, try to remove or reduce as many as you can and think of other possible micro stressors in you life that can be managed.

- 1) Piercing Morning Alarm Clock Tune
- 2) Work Overload
- 3) Poor Nutrition
- 4) Dehydration
- 5) Relationships
- 6) Sugar, Coffee, Alcohol, Smoking
- 7) Sitting Too Long
- 8) Making Decisions
- 9) Watching The News
- 10) Information Overload i.e. Social Media

## Create a Sacred Day.

Create a day like the traditional British Sunday where you spend time with loved ones, eat long meals, play games, undertake hobbies and relax.

Create a short, powerful & positive statement e.g. 'I am enough as I am now' or 'I control what I can and let go of what I cannot'. Now display this affirmation around the house, work or even as a screen saver and repeat the affirmation for 1-2 minutes in the morning & as many times as you can through out the day.

## Affirmations

## Schedule Your Time

Scheduling your day can be very good if you feel like your not getting enough done in the day. Note down everything you need to do that day from eating breakfast to walking to work and then tick each thing off as you go. Ticking things off is scientifically proven to create a rewarding buzz and you may feel more accomplished. It is also important to schedule in some kind of exercise, something joyful, a small step necessary to complete a long term goal and time to relax even if it is just 5 minutes for each.

*'Practice doing nothing for a few minutes, such as waiting in a queue or riding on the bus. No phones, no books, just be in the moment'*

## Gratitude

- 1) Practice wishing kindness to others as this has been proven to make you feel more love, content & hopeful.
- 2) In a journal or on a piece of paper write down each evening a **person** you feel grateful for that day, a **pleasure** you experienced and a **promise** such as an arranged event, a future purchase, etc.

## Set Routines

Create some routines in your day, such as a set morning schedule from waking up to getting to work. Completing habitual routines tells your brain that everything is safe and your are in control. To really make the most of this time factor in some of the techniques on this handout!

## Human Touch

Human touch tells our brains that we are safe, accepted and there is nothing to worry about.

- Hold a partners hand
- Hug a friend
- Have a massage
- Play fight
- Stroke your own arm
- Get a weighted blanket

## Human Connection

In the past we would have lived in tribes, where we would have looked after one another in order to survive. Our brains have not evolved much since this time and therefore by seeking a community of people to surround yourself with will tell your brain you are safe and reduce a stress response. Nurture your friendships, book onto a weekly class and connect with neighbours.

### References:

Chatterjee, R. (2018). The Stress Solution. London: Penguin Random House.



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## Sleep

Poor sleep is a major contributor towards stress.

To get the best sleep it is important to 1) not consume caffeine 6 hours before bed and your last meal 3 hours before bed, 2) have a wind down routine, such as taking a bath and reading a book, 3) Avoid all forms of technology 90 minutes before bed or wear blue light blocking glasses and 4) wake up at the same time every day (even at weekends).

### Let Go

It is important to let go of that which no longer serves you, from a negative friend to an ornament that no longer brings you joy.

### Boundaries

It is important in today's society to control your boundaries, from not saying yes to someone when you really just want a night in to having dedicated time that you read your emails or log into social media. Give your time respect and give clear boundaries so other do to. Turning of unimportant notifications can really help.

### Keep Your Mircobiome Happy.

There are trillions of microbes that live both inside and outside the body. Some are helpful, others more destructive and in the gut they communicate with the brain. These signal are not yet fully understood but scientists are finding out that if you keep your gut bugs happy with colourful wholefoods rich in fibre, eat within a 12 hour window and keep snacking to a minimum they will keep you happy. If you feed them additives, antibiotics, pesticides, sugar, you over exercise, hyper clean, etc then this can result in many negative effects from IBS to anxiety.

### Exercise Or Movement

A little bit of stress is good for the body, such as through exercise. In the right dose of exercise tells your brain you are thriving, if you over do it then it will result in more stress. Daily movement or exercise creates a little bit of stress that the body is able to respond to and over time it makes the body better able to deal with stressful situations. Try a few minutes of quick burst exercise such as star jumps or brisk walk and find a sport that you enjoy. Make sure to listen to your body if you find after exercise you are irritable, frequently ill, etc and reduce the intensity.

*Create a golden hour in your morning where you keep your phone turned off for 1 hour after you wake up.*

### Nature

Being in nature tells our brains and bodies that we are in a restful place. If you cannot spend time each day in nature consider getting a water fountain, play the sounds of the sea, stargaze, light a log fire, diffuse woody essential oils and put images of nature around your home and on your tech to help your mind and body feel calmer.

### Breathing & Meditation

The brain is monitors our breathing too fast and the brain will think we are in possible danger, where as calm, full breaths can do the opposite and tell our brains that we are relaxed and everything is ok. Correct breathing

should be in and out of the nose and your tummy should move in and out. There are many different breathing techniques you can try, here are two to get you started: 1) Simply take 6 deep breaths in and out, 2) Breathe in for 3 seconds, hold for 4 seconds and out for 5 seconds 6 times. Complete 6 rounds upon rising, at lunch time and before bed. Over time you may want to extend the number of rounds. Connect with your mind before and after to see if you feel any different.

### Quick Ways To Relieve Stress

- 1 Minute of Intense Exercise
- Scream into a pillow
- Cry
- Laugh
- Massage Yourself
- Deep Breathing