



# 10 Simple Stress Relief Tips and Tricks

## CPOST On-the-Job Training

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### 1. EXERCISE

Exercise and physical activity not only tell your body to release stress-battling hormones, but both practices have a ton of other benefits too, like allowing you to procrastinate less, focus more, and act more disciplined. If you're serious about relieving stress, you should not overlook how effective exercise is at calming you down. And the practice not only reduces stress in the short-term. Research has shown that exercise actually "reorganizes the brain to be more resilient to stress" in the long run!



### 2. GET A GOOD NIGHT SLEEP



Lack of sleep causes a whole host of problems-when it comes to your mental and physical health. According to WebMD not getting enough sleep can make your skin look older, contribute to depression/stress, make you less productive and raise your blood pressure. So, if getting enough Zzzz's hasn't been a priority, make it one now. Start to wind down a little earlier, drink chamomile tea, step away from your phone, and put that tablet down.

### 3. MEDITATION

Meditation reduces your blood pressure, reduces your negative emotions, and helps you relax more than anything else on this list. You don't need anything special to get started, either. You can start by just by breathing fully and deeply into the abdomen while focusing on your breath. Try to keep an open mind, and clear away any worries that you have for a few minutes. Just five minutes of mindful breathing can bring about a sense of calmness and increase relaxation.



### 4. LISTEN TO MUSIC



Listening to music is so effective at relieving stress that there's a whole organization named the American Music Therapy Association designed to study and promote music's effects on health. Studies have shown that listening to slow, relaxing music slows down your pulse and heart rate, lowers your blood pressure, and actually decreases levels of stress hormones in your body. Listening to music even promotes better and more restful sleep patterns.

### 5. SPEND TIME WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY

Investing time into your relationships has far-reaching benefits for your health. A strong social support network made up of friends and family gives you a sense of belonging, increased self-worth, security, and most importantly, significantly reduces your stress levels. According to the Mayo Clinic, "taking the time to build a social support network is a wise investment not only in your mental well-being but also in your physical health and longevity."





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### 6. GET A MASSAGE

Virtually every symptom listed by the American Psychological Association can benefit from massage. Research has shown that it can lower your heart rate and blood pressure, relax your muscles and increase the production of endorphins, your body's natural "feel good" chemical. Serotonin and dopamine are also released through massage, and the result is a feeling of calm relaxation that makes chronic or habitual as well as acute or short-term stress much easier to overcome.



### 7. TRY AROMATHERAPY



Aromatherapy has been shown to carry many benefits in terms of wellness and stress relief. Studies have shown that aromatherapy does indeed have an effect on brainwaves and can alter behavior. Not all scents are created equal though. Lavender for example is associated with feelings of contentment, improved cognitive performance (some measures) and mood. It has also shown to have other mild sedative and calming effects.

### 8. EAT SUPERFOODS

Here's some good news to keep in mind the next time you're stressed out: Eating may be a stay-calm trick. Choosing specific *healthy* foods can actually impact your mood on a positive note, helping to relieve tension, stabilize blood sugar, and send your stress packing. Stress busting superfoods include green leafy vegetables, turkey breast, fermented foods, salmon, blueberries, oatmeal, and dark chocolate. Try eating one of these superfoods next time you're experiencing stress.



### 9. DRINK BLACK OR GREEN TEA



Drinking black and green tea has been known to bring calming effects to the body. Studies show that the amino acid L-theanine found in black tea can help you relax and concentrate better. Black tea has also been shown to reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol when consumed in moderate amounts on a regular basis. Green tea has theanine which is an amino acid that provides a relaxing effect on the body and mind. So grab a cup and enjoy!

### 10. LAUGH MORE

Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells, thus improving your resistance to disease. Laughter triggers the release of endorphins which promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain. Need a good laugh? Try watching cute animal videos online. Research shows that negative emotions were lower and positive emotions were higher after viewing online animal videos.

