**Four Tips to Reduce Stress and Get a Better Night's Sleep**

Stress is part of modern everyday life. Unfortunately stress interferes with getting a good night's sleep. You might think you're stuck with being stressed out, but there are a number of ways to reduce stress that you can take. Below are four tricks to reduce stress. None cost you any money and very little time.

Shhh, Quiet.

We're surrounded by noise. The TV's always going. The radio gets turned on the moment we get in the car. The loud speakers blare as we grocery shop. It's a noisy world and that noise adds to stress levels. Enjoy the peacefulness of quiet. Intentionally spend 15 to 30 minutes in peaceful silence. You don't even have to do anything but listen to the silence if you don't want to. Break the habit of always turning on the TV. Turn on soft music instead.

Start Your Day on a Positive Note

Don't get bogged down by last night's dishes, early morning laundry chores or racing around the house to get yourself ready for work. That's just starting your day loaded with stress. Try to get those chores done in the evening rather than in the morning. If you have to get up a few minutes earlier. Start the day by reading from your favorite inspirational book. Have a cup of coffee on your back porch looking at the sun rise. Take a few moments and write in your journal. Schedule these in your calendar. The world will wait and you will be ready for it.

Take Time for Yourself Every Day

Do something you enjoy every day. It can be something as simple as taking a walk with your puppy pal, or stroking your kitty cat. Value yourself by giving yourself a treat. If you love to garden but just haven't had the time. Make the time. Buy an assortment of herbs and pots and potter for a bit. Give yourself a facial or other beauty treatment. Doing something you like is a great stress buster.

Live Each Day for That Day

The past can't be repeated it can only be learned from. The future hasn't happened yet. Right now is the only time you have. Learn to let go of events in the past. Don't aggravate yourself by thinking what you might have done. Forgive yourself for your mistakes and remember what you've learned. Those in the know call this "mindfulness." It's really just living in the moment.

**Four Tricks to Get Rid of Stress for a Restful Night's Sleep**

We've all had those days when it's nonstop action from the minute you get up until when you fall into bed at night. Unfortunately all that stress can mean you stay awake for hours instead of sliding into dream land. Below are four tricks to help you get rid of stress and get a restful night's sleep.

Only Worry When it Counts

There are some things you can control and many you can't. Only worry about what you can control, otherwise it's wasted. For example: If you're in charge of a family reunion picnic -- you can't control the weather. What you can control is the location. So make sure that there is a rained-out alternative just in case, then you won't have to worry about the weather. If you're worried about a doctor's appointment for your annual checkup, don't worry about what the doctor may find. Start a healthier lifestyle now.

What's Really the Problem?

Often we overreact to situations because we're concerned about something else. Say, your boss comes in and asks you to fast track a project you've been working on and you become livid with outrage. Maybe you're not really angry with your boss, the project or the new deadline. It could be you're upset because your teenage son didn't come home till past midnight. If you can figure out what's really the problem you save yourself a lot of stress and concentrate on solving the problem, instead of creating new ones.

Changing Your Diet

Include more fresh vegetables and fruits and less sugars, salt, and refined carbohydrates is helpful. Instead of rushing through a fast food lunch loaded with salt and fat, bring your own healthy salad from home. Obviously decreasing your caffeine intake would help as well. Caffeine aggravates some of the symptoms of stress. Lemon balm tea is a good substitute for coffee as it has calming properties.

Increase the level of vitamin C

Vitamin C is an antioxidant which boosts the immune system and has been shown to decrease stress-related infections. Other antioxidants you might consider are Vitamin A and E. Citrus fruits are a source packed with Vitamin C. So are tomatoes. Start the habit of having a fresh orange every morning for breakfast or as your midafternoon snack instead of grabbing something from the office vending machine. If you can't get enough vitamin C from fruits and vegetables, try a supplement.

**Essential Oils Drop Your Stress Levels for a Good Night's Sleep**

You probably know that lavender is relaxing. It's even put in baby lotions to help infants drift off to dreamland. Lavender oil is only one of several essential oils that reduce stress and promotes a good night's sleep. It's important to use real essential oils rather than chemical substitutes. If possible buy essential oils that has been produced from organic plants. You don’t want any residues of pesticides and herbicides in the oil.

Aromatherapy brings down stress levels. Aromatherapy relies on the use of essential oils. Essential oils are derived from plants, herbs, flowers, woods and citrus fruit peel. Lavender. Clary Sage, rosemary, sandalwood, tangerine, Roman chamomile, ylang ylang, bergamot, marjoram, and of course lavender, are essential oils that have a calming, soothing effect.

Add essential oils to a non-scented candle, beeswax is best since its natural substance. Light the candle and let it develop a pool of melted wax around the wick. Blow out the candle and add the essential oil to the melted wax and then relight. If you just add the oil to the melted wax while the candle is lit, the oil floats on top and is burnt off immediately. Give the essential oil a chance to mingle with the hot candle wax.

Diffusers spread the essential oil throughout the air. Some work using water and act as a humidifier, others use ultrasonic waves to diffuse the oil. Diffuser sticks are simply wood sticks that soak up the oil and spread the scent, sort of the way incense sticks do. The difference is you don't light the wood sticks.

Add essential oils to a warm bath, ¼ teaspoon to a teaspoon. The warm bath itself reduces stress by increasing blood circulation and relaxing muscles. Epsom salt and sea salt (1 to 2 cups) added to a bath tub in addition to the essential oils soothe sore muscles and adds a sense of buoyancy. As an added bonus your body temperatures drops when you get out of the bath, that signals your brain it's time to sleep.

Sprinkle a few drops of calming essential oils on a handkerchief. Enclose in a zipped locked bag and keep in your purse for those moments you're stressed out. Open the bag and gently sniff. Keep a baggie with lavender essential oil scented hankie in your nightstand.

Be careful applying any essential oil directly to your skin unless you're positive you won't have a reaction. It's better to use a carrier oil such as almond, avocado or sunflower oil to dilute the essential oi.

**What Do Flowers, Chocolate and Yoga Have in Common?**

The answer is simple. Flowers, chocolate and yoga all reduce stress. Reduced stress means a better night's sleep. Below are a few not soo well known tips that can reduce your stress levels.

Flowers are calming. Fresh flowers bring the outdoor in. The scents and colors are soothing. Even photos or pictures of flowers have a soothing effect. Make it a point to buy a pot of blooming flowers every week. The grocery store often has reasonably priced flowers.

Exercise is a time tested method of reducing stress levels. Just make sure that the exercise is completed at least four hours before bed time. Exercising closer to bedtime might make it more difficult to fall asleep. If stress builds up at work, for example, take a 15 minute break and go for a walk or run up and down the stairs.

Grab a chunk of chocolate. It's true chocolate makes you happy and that relieves stress. Chocolate also has health benefits. Don't go over board one square of dark chocolate is all you need.

Got a pet? Stroking your dog or cat or even your pet rabbit lowers not only stress levels but your blood pressure as well. Use long firm but gentle strokes. Focus on your pet not your worries. Looking directly into your pet's face calms both of you.

Get some sunshine. The light relieves stress and builds up your vitamin D. Being outside is soothing. Take a brief walk in the park or just sit in your garden for a few minutes.

**Eat protein with every meal.** Protein boosts your energy levels and that can decrease stress. Sources include nuts, dairy products, beans, and lean meats. A portion is about 3 ounces or the size of a deck of cards.

**Massage, especially of the neck and shoulders** reduces stress, and helps alleviate the headaches that some people experience with stress. Self massage performed on the temples, and back of the neck, relieves stress.

**Yoga and Pilates (an exercise discipline)** include stretching movements which releases tension within the muscles and aids in blood flow, thereby reducing stress. This type of gentle exercise is great in the morning as it starts your day off. Stretch your legs, arms, torso and neck. Then shower all that relieved stress away.