

# 10 Steps to reduce stress in your life



**Check your diet.** Did you know that your stomach can affect your mood? Many studies have been written on the mind/gut link, showing how problems like depression and anxiety can be caused or worsened by eating badly. Try to reduce junk foods because they have hardly any nutrients. Use more herbs when creating dishes, rather than relying on packet or jar mixes. Sugar is extremely addictive but you can swap to Fruit Sugar or Coconut sugar as it is sweeter and you need less. Raw honey also helps with sugar cravings.



**Aim to drink more filtered water every day.** This doesn't need to be expensive bottled water. You could invest in a good filter jug. Increase your water intake slowly so that you eventually are drinking around 8 average sized glasses of water spread throughout the day. Cups of tea and coffee do not count as water! Remember that water makes up approximately 60% of your body weight. A lack of water can cause dehydration, which even on a mild level can make you feel drained, tired, irritable and prone to headaches.



**Reduce caffeine.** If you really cannot go a day without a cup of tea or coffee, aim to drink it before 2pm. This will allow your body to process the caffeine so you are not kept awake at night. Decaffeinated drinks are just as bad for you, because the two most common methods to remove the caffeine is to use a chemical solvent or carbon dioxide to strip it out. Try fruit and herb teas, or make your own juices. Caffeine is addictive but you could swap it for a drink of cacao, which you make simply with water and add a little honey or healthy sugar. Cacao really helps to balance energy swings and your appetite.



**Reduce Alcohol and Cigarettes.** It goes without saying that these contain toxins which put a strain on your nervous and immune system. Once again they are extremely addictive. They may give you some initial relief from stress but eventually you may find you are unable to unwind without them ... and this is where other problems begin. If you find your alcohol consumption is getting out of control please speak to your GP or contact a support group such as Alcoholics Anonymous.



**Get to bed before 11pm.** This ensures that you get at least 7 hours of sleep. Sleep helps the body to digest food so you are also less prone to weight gain and more able to deal with stressors in the day. Some people may need more than this; up to 9 hours. As we get older it may be less. Sleep is a critical component to overall health. Without enough sleep the brain cannot function properly.



**Minimise technology.** The blue light that is emitted from your screen activates your brain, which means that more stress hormones are produced by the adrenal gland. Stop using your devices (laptop, phone etc) a good hour before you go to bed to help you to have more restful sleep. Never sleep with your mobile phone under your pillow or close to your bed, as it emits radiation, which can cause headaches and other health issues. The same applies to if you have a computer in your bedroom. If you cannot move it to another room, turn it off from the plug socket at night and cover it with a throw to minimise electromagnetic interference.



**Get Outside!** Just 20 minutes sitting in the garden or taking a short walk will benefit your body, and keep your head clear. Ideally getting into nature whenever you can would be incredibly helpful for stress reduction; particularly walking where there are a lot of trees can be such an energy boost. This is called Grounding, and helps the body to release any electrical energy it has picked up from being in front of a computer or on the phone for too long, and release it back into the earth.



**Listen to soothing music.** This is especially helpful nearer to bedtime or in the early evening. Music that is fast or loud can be great earlier on in the day and can also be uplifting. As the day comes to an end you will want to avoid raising your heartbeat and integrate calmer melodies. There are many meditation music channels on the internet to give you an idea of the sort of music you would find relaxing. Guided meditations are also very soothing as they help the mind to focus on one thing at a time.



**Jot it down.** If you find it impossible to drift off to sleep because you are constantly thinking about your to-do-list tomorrow, then jot it down. Get a pad and pen and actually write your list of actions for tomorrow, or anything else that is worrying you. This way you will know you won't forget it and you can clear your head to have a deeper sleep.



**Declutter!** How can decluttering make you feel less stressed? We often hold onto things which we no longer need. The best way to sort out a messy room or home is to ask 2 simple questions.  
1. Do I use this thing?  
2. Do I love this thing? If you do not use it and do not love it (in other words, it holds no sentimental feelings or memories for you) then get rid of it. Give to charity or recycle. Energy is everywhere and everywhere and if your space is full of stuff that you don't like or use it can make you feel blocked and generally irritable.