Twelve Weeks of Daily Suggestions for Coping with Stress

Be creative in coping with stress. Think outside the confines of daily schedules and pressures. Make time to take care of yourself. Here are 118 suggestions to cope with stress.

Week 1

- Watch a sunrise or sunset
- Stop to watch an ant, squirrels, birds, or chipmunks
- Be quiet and listen to the birds sing
- Watch and whisper your thoughts to a butterfly
- Look at the stars
- Smell a flower
- Tell your problems to a stone, then throw it into a river
- Say something nice to yourself in a mirror
- Wave and say "Hello" to a stranger
- Explore your options

Week 2

- · Sit by water and breathe deeply
- Write in a journal while sitting in a relaxing place
- Visualize a stressful person in your life as a cartoon character
- Stand in the sun and imagine its energy and warmth are reenergizing you
- Take a warm shower or bubble bath
- Get a massage
- Rub your ears to stimulate pressure points and meridians of your body
- Massage your hands and fingers, especially the base of your thumb
- Pet a dog or cat

Week 3

- Rub the center of your sternum in a circular motion to massage the thymus gland until it stops hurting or for one minute
- Avoid tight clothes
- Give up chemical aids such as caffeine and sugar
- Eat nutritious snacks (e.g., apples, nuts, carrots), not simple carbohydrates (e.g., candy)
- · Simplify meals
- Avoid negative people
- Call someone for a 1-minute phone call to say "Hi"
- Let your emotions out by screaming, crying, and laughing
- Talk less and listen more

Week 4

- Phone an old friend and reminisce about old times
- Stop feeling bad about an encounter by imagining yourself saying what you wish you had said, and then forget it
- Practice talking in front of a mirror, saying scripts or things you would like to say to people
- Set appointments
- Write things down; make a list
- Set priorities via lists or some other reminder system

- · Ask for help with jobs you dislike
- Finger paint
- Doodle

Week 5

- Break down large tasks into small steps and work on them a little at a time
- Look at problems as challenges, not obstacles
- Say "no" more often
- Identify your boundaries
- Make duplicate keys and hide them in accessible places
- Use time wisely
- Copy important papers and keep them together in a special safe place
- Open mail beside the wastebasket and throw away discards immediately
- Hug a child

Week 6

- Un-clutter your life and your living space
- · Throw away or give away something every day
- Make repairs or throw broken things away
- Plan a play activity
- Mark play time in your appointment book in yellow
- Watch cartoons or a children's movie and laugh
- · Read a children's book aloud to a child or yourself
- Fly a kite
- Walk in the rain
- Praise others
- Trust yourself and your intuition

Week 7

- Buy a stuffed animal to hug
- Respond to questions with, "I don't know all the answers"
- Make something with modeling clay
- Smile at a person walking by
- Believe in yourself
- Stop talking negatively
- Visualize yourself winning
- Develop a sense of humor
- Stop thinking tomorrow will be better
- Take naps

Week 8

- Live in today
- Write out two goals and dates to achieve them
- Dance in your living room
- Ask a friend or co-worker for a hug
- Remind yourself to breathe slowly and deeply
- Whistle or sing to yourself
- Read a poem
- · Listen to music
- Forget about everything and spend a day or two reading a novel

Week 9

- Do something new
- Buy yourself a flower
- Ask someone to be a support person for you
- Find a "vent" partner
- Do it today
- Be optimistic
- Do things in moderation
- Change your appearance
- Strive for excellence, not perfection
- Lay down for 5 to 10 minutes with your feet up

Week 10

- Stretch your limits
- Go to a museum
- Hum a tune
- Plant a seed
- Feed the birds
- Stretch at least twice a day
- Schedule time for physical activity
- Have a plan "B"
- Acknowledge your feelings

Week 11

- Be self-caring, not selfish; meet your needs
- Know your limits and push beyond them
- Make love
- Throw a paper airplane
- Learn a new song
- Drive a different route to work
- Get to work early
- Leave work early
- Put air freshener in your car

Week 12

- Clean a closet
- Play with a child
- Go on a picnic
- Have a picnic on the living room floor
- Watch a movie and eat popcorn
- · Scream at a ball game
- Eat a meal by candlelight
- Keep a journal
- Share a smile
- Quit trying to fix others
- Get enough sleep