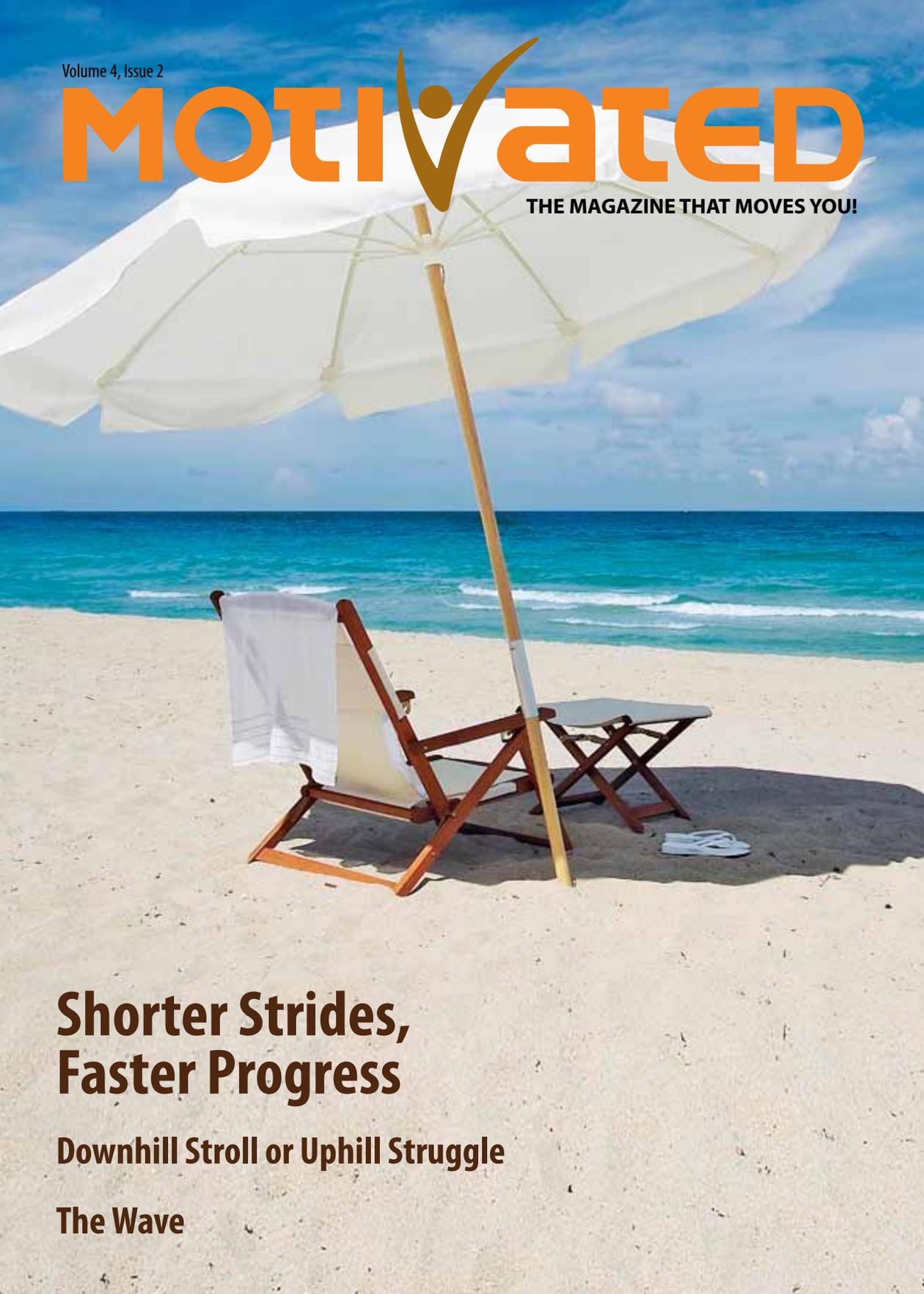


Volume 4, Issue 2

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!



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Everyone has experienced the debilitating effects of stress, whether as a student cramming before an important exam, a parent juggling the demands of work and family, a relative or close friend of someone facing a serious health problem, a professional struggling to stay current, or one of millions trying to stay on their feet in a shaky economy.

Much has been written on the subject, and many suggestions have been made on how to beat stress. Most articles on the topic promote a change in the way we view stress, and suggest that an attitude adjustment is key in stress management.

One anecdote describes it this way:

When visiting a well-known furniture factory, our guide, the manager, pointed out a beautifully grained and shaped cabinet in natural wood. "I want you to look at the beauty of this oak," he said. "It is the finest selected timber of its kind. The secret of the intricate and beautiful graining is this: the tree from which the wood was taken grew in a spot where it was almost constantly exposed to storms."

What a suggestive fact: The storm-beaten tree developed the closest, finest, and most intricately woven fibers. When cut down and its exquisitely figured grain lay bare, the cabinetmaker selected it as the material for his finest work.

So it is in our human life. The storms of life can strengthen and beautify us if we can learn to face those storms positively and stand strong through them.

The articles selected for this issue of *Motivated* guarantee to shed a different and more positive light on stressful situations, and will help you beat stress like never before.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*



Shorter Strides, Faster Progress

By Jessie Richards

A couple of years ago I started running for exercise, and I've tried to be consistent with it. I quickly built up to longer distances and durations than when I started, but then I hit a plateau and stayed there for a year or more. I found it difficult to increase my endurance beyond a certain point, and I found it particularly difficult to increase my speed.

Then about a month ago, I went for a run with a friend who's been running for years and is in excellent shape, and I asked him to critique my running.

"If you take shorter strides than you're taking now and let your feet move more quickly," he advised, "you'll last longer and your running speed will pick up."

That hadn't occurred to me before. I hadn't been trying to move in any particular manner, but just let my body take me where and how it would. When I started paying attention and focusing on taking smaller steps, I found that I didn't really have to "try" to move more quickly; it just happened. The change wasn't dramatic, but enough for me to tell I was making progress.

A month later, my running has definitely improved. My breathing is less labored, my energy level stays higher, and my speed is increasing. This morning I ran the same distance on the track where I made my discovery, and did so in considerably less time, even without

consciously trying. Best of all, I didn't feel like I was straining, struggling, and short on breath. I felt relaxed and enjoyed it from start to finish. In fact, I felt that I could have just as easily kept running.

Shortly after my discovery, it occurred to me to test the same principle in other areas of my life, particularly my work. I like to think of myself as a "get things done" person, but I have to admit that I have a problem with procrastinating. It's not that I'm lazy. I'm happy to work hard and put in the hours, and I relish few things more than having completed a project. Yet I find myself habitually avoiding the initial dig into large or long-term jobs, often putting them off until I have to cram to meet a deadline.

Recently I figured out why I do that: I've always assumed that I needed to make progress on big projects in big strides. But applying my running principle to my work, I realized that with smaller steps I could maximize efficiency, move more quickly, cover the same distance in less time and with less effort, and not be so exhausted at the end.

I'm not desperately playing catch-up. I'm not struggling to get in the mileage. I'm learning that sometimes the best and most lasting improvement is made not in one dramatic move, but bit-by-bit and step-by-step. Shorter strides make for faster progress. 

DOWNHILL STROLL OR UPHILL STRUGGLE

By Ali Luke, Dumb Little Man, May 31, 2012

Back in college, I came across a life-changing personal development concept. It made an immediate difference to my academic work—and it's still something that helps me every day.

That concept was the idea of resistance, set out in Mark Forster's book, *Get Everything Done and Still Have Time to Play*. Resistance is that feeling you get when you think about a big project or a difficult task; you naturally want to put it off in favor of something easier.

Resistance crops up when...

- ✓ **You've got a book/article/newsletter to write.**
- ✓ **You need to completely rework your résumé.**
- ✓ **You have to make a difficult phone call.**
- ✓ **You know you should go for a jog, but it's raining outside.**

...and in pretty much any situation when you're facing something hard.

Giving in to resistance might feel tempting, but it's not a good idea.

In the short-term, it means that every day feels like an uphill struggle. You'll put off the hard, important tasks in favor of the easy, less important ones—

and as the day goes by, you get lower and lower on energy as the tasks get harder and harder.

In the long-term, it means you won't meet your goals. Almost anything worth pursuing will involve at least a few moments of high resistance. If you want to write a novel, run a marathon, or have a successful business, you can't do it if you keep letting resistance stop you.

So, what can you do to stay on top?

Forster suggests that instead of seeing resistance as a signal to procrastinate, you should see it as a signpost to what you need to do first. If you really don't feel like making that difficult phone call, it's probably just the thing to begin your day with.

There are lots of reasons to complete the high-resistance tasks first:

- ✓ **Once they're done, they'll be off your mind.**
- ✓ **You'll feel good about achieving something meaningful at the start of your day.**
- ✓ **The rest of your day will look simpler and easier in comparison.**

When you keep putting tasks off, they get harder and harder. Charlie Gilkey describes them as "frogs", explaining,

THE WAVE

By Janet Barnes

"a frog project is just one of those projects that you really don't want to do but know you need to do." By catching those "frogs" early, you prevent them growing big and ugly.

What are you resisting today? I bet there's something on your to-do list that you've been putting off for a while. It could be something tiny, like tracking down and ordering a spare part for a kitchen appliance. It could be something huge, like starting your marathon training plan.

Today, spend ten minutes working on something that you've been resisting. You can do anything for ten minutes, however tough it might seem.—And if ten minutes sounds pointless—do it anyway; you might be surprised how much progress you can make.

Tomorrow (and every other day), take a good look at your to-do list in the morning.

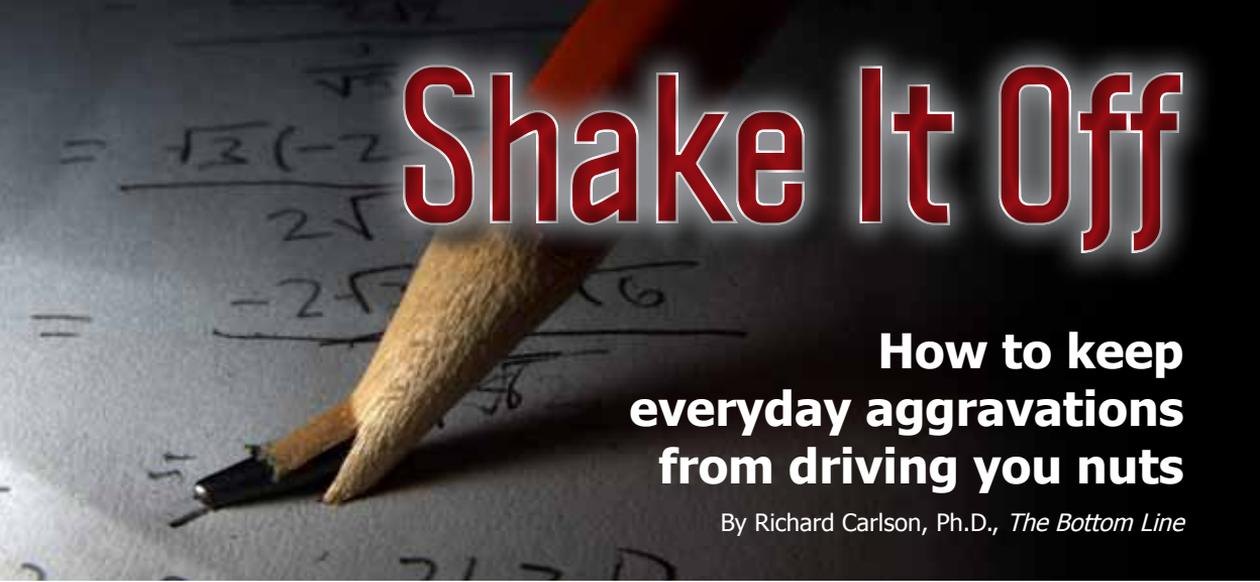
Instead of starting off with an easy or habitual task, like answering emails, start by spending 20 minutes on a high-resistance task.

Even just 20 minutes a day makes a difference, but there's also a good chance that, once you get going, you'll find that resistance magically melts away. ◀◀

One morning when I was at O wits' end, I checked my email and saw that a friend had sent me a video clip. It turned out to be a collection of relaxing beach scenes, with soft instrumental music playing in the background. The waves washing on the shore reminded me of the peaceful beauty of nature, and the gentle, repetitive sight and sound of the surf rolling onto the sand soothed my spirit.

When I had calmed down enough to think more clearly, it dawned on me that most waves are the result of winds out at sea, turbulence. There is continual movement as each wave builds over time and distance. It picks up speed and breaks when it reaches the shallows. It stretches along the warm sand until it is just a thin sheet. Then, slowly and silently, it retreats back into the sea. On and on it goes—building, breaking, spreading, and returning in an endless cycle.

The winds of adversity can create some big waves, like the ones that had engulfed me that morning. I felt buffeted and agitated, but it helped to remember that they were only for a time. Each trouble would run its course, retreat, and fade away. Peace and order would return.—And they did. ◀◀



Shake It Off

How to keep everyday aggravations from driving you nuts

By Richard Carlson, Ph.D., *The Bottom Line*

Most of us have within ourselves the emotional resources to endure true calamities—the death of a loved one, a natural disaster, etc. Yet some of us come unglued when confronted with traffic jams, misplaced keys, rude colleagues, and other everyday annoyances. Sound familiar? Read on for ways to stop overreacting.

See annoying people as teachers

Is the salesclerk dawdling despite the long line? If so, you can fume about how he/she is wasting your time—and raise your blood pressure in the process—or you can see the clerk as a person who is teaching you to have patience and to appreciate individuals who perform hard work for little pay. The same method works in many other scenarios: A motorist cuts in front of you on the highway. He’s teaching you how foolish it is to be in such a hurry and to take needless risks. A woman steps in front of you and takes the taxi you’ve just hailed. She’s teaching you the importance of leaving

yourself plenty of time to get to your appointments and of being considerate of others.

Don’t label things as “good” or “bad”. When one thing fails to pan out, look for another path. There are many.

Keep mishaps in perspective

Although it’s hard to realize this at the time, spilling soup on your suit just before an important meeting is not a tragedy. Even having your wallet stolen isn’t particularly important in the long run. Before you “catastrophize” a particular situation, stop for a moment and picture yourself looking back at the incident a year later. Did the stain on your suit really matter? Of course not. Were you able to get your credit cards reissued? Sure. And life went on.

Avoid needless stress

If you feel a twinge in your foot while jogging, it’s prudent to stop, to avoid aggravating any possible injury.

Similarly, it's a good idea to resolve not to tolerate stressful situations. For example, if your mind is full of lists of all the things you have to do, notice your thinking process as soon as possible. Stop it before it gets out of control. Emotional stress is a warning signal that must be heeded. Either you have too much to handle, or you're letting the little things bother you too much. Either way, you need to make some sort of change.

Avoid being materialistic

Consider all the objects that hold sentimental value for you—an heirloom vase, a beautiful necklace, your child's first drawing, etc. We know that these things can be easily broken, destroyed, or lost, yet we rarely consider any of these threats a real possibility. And when something valuable to us is lost, we become deeply upset. Keep this from happening by periodically imagining that the treasured items are already gone. Aren't there still beautiful sunsets? Yes. And you can still enjoy the memory of the objects you've lost. Now, if someone breaks that vase or spills coffee on that drawing, you won't go to pieces.

Schedule time for relaxation

Our society encourages us to defer relaxation. Relaxation is something we'll have time for on our next vacation, we think, or during retirement. Such thinking is terribly misguided. The average person gets only a few weeks of vacation each year, and most of us

must work until our 60s to receive full retirement benefits.

In the meantime, we spend so much time rushing around and thinking about what needs to get done next that we're unable to derive much pleasure from our lives.

Here's a better way: No matter how busy you are, schedule relaxation breaks into your day. They can be nothing more than taking a few minutes to breathe deeply, go for a brief walk, or write a note to someone who needs cheering up. Fight your tendency to put off relaxation until tomorrow. Remember—when "tomorrow" comes, it will be called "today." Spend a few minutes relaxing today—every day.

Don't expect everyone to like you

It's a fact of life—some people you meet during your life will like you, and others won't. Trying too hard to make people like you generates a great deal of psychological stress. Always do your best, but don't get mad or upset if someone doesn't seem to like you. If someone criticizes you, minimize the aggravation you feel simply by agreeing with the criticism and moving on.

Always be flexible

It's fine to be organized and plan ahead. Just don't be surprised or upset if your schedule changes. Count on it—airline flights will be delayed, promises will be broken, and the weather won't always cooperate. When these things happen, don't get angry. Shrug them off and get on with your life. ◀◀



Stress Management

A lecturer, when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked, “How heavy is this glass of water?”

Answers called out ranged from 20 grams to 500 grams. The lecturer replied, “The absolute weight doesn’t matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it.”

“If I hold it for a minute, that’s not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I’ll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you’ll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it’s the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes.”

He continued. “And that’s the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, eventually, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won’t be able to carry on. As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we’re refreshed, we can carry on with the burden.”

“So, before you return home tonight, put the burden of work down. Don’t carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow. Whatever burdens you’re carrying now, put them down for a moment if you can. Relax, and pick them up later after you’ve rested. Life is short. Enjoy it!” 

Did You Know...

No matter how much pressure you feel at work, if you could find ways to relax for at least five minutes every hour, you’d be more productive. Most stress we bring on ourselves through bad habits and bad attitudes. Take a pencil and paper and write down everything in your day that produces stress, checking the aggravations that create the greatest stress. Analyze all the ways you might change these situations. If you talked with a co-worker, would it ease the stress? If you got up half an hour earlier, could you stop running and take time to walk, or even stroll? Do you exercise at least twenty minutes a day? If you don’t, you should, because it will relieve stress and allow you to work and sleep better.

–Dr. Joyce Brothers



10 Tips for Stress-Free Work

According to Michael Mercer, an industrial psychologist

1. Get along with people. “Low-stress employees invariably have smooth working relationships with practically everyone,” Mercer said. To achieve this, find things you have in common with others and act friendly with “absolutely everybody”—from the president down to those who clean the office.

2. Always be diplomatic and tactful. Avoid acting angrily or impatiently even when you’re frustrated. “Expressing anger in the workplace usually results in direct or indirect retaliation, which surely increases stress,” Mercer said.

3. Learn what is expected of you. Find out your boss’s expectations of you and the expectations of your boss’s boss. “These people will make or break your career and greatly affect your stress levels,” Mercer said. “By meeting their expectations you simultaneously can get ahead plus decrease a possible cause of stress.”

4. Be a team player with your boss and co-workers. “Team players are appreciative and receive much less grief than employees who act rebelliously or act like loners,” he said.

5. Give three compliments a day at work. “People love receiving compliments and will try to make your life easier since you made them feel good with a compliment. They’ll remember the compliment when you ask for a favor.”

6. Set goals for yourself—personal and work-related. High-stress people rarely

do things to accomplish their goals. Low-stress people, on the other hand, spend more than half their time doing things that help them achieve their short-term or long-term goals. “People feel more frustrated when they don’t accomplish their goals.”

7. Prepare a daily “to-do” list. “Every day before leaving work, write a list of what you need to do the next work day,” Mercer said. That little bit of organization can help prevent you from being overwhelmed by tasks that need to be done.

8. Keep a neat desk or work space. We’re not talking obsessive neatness here. Mercer said his desk is nine by four feet—all of which is covered with paper except for a 2-by-2-foot space in front of him. He reserves that space for things he is working on at that moment.

9. Exercise at least a little every day. Even a 10-minute walk will help. “People bottle up emotional tension or stress in their muscles,” Mercer said. By exercising a little, you can release emotional and physical stress—and be more clearheaded when deciding how to tackle a stressful situation.

10. Consider changing jobs. “If the above nine tips don’t help you, then it may be time to find a new job,” Mercer said. If all else fails, he cites an often-used quote: “If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.” ◀◀



Stress Management for Kids

Web Reprint, <http://www.stressmanagementtips.com>

From the bogeyman for small children to the bogies of SATs and final exams for the college-bound, stress affects kids of all ages. The first thing a parent can do to help their child manage stress is to build a strong family unit. Include your children in family discussions and be on the lookout for stress in your kids.

Recognizing stress in children

Especially small children with under-developed communication skills may display stress very differently than an adult does. Often kids' stress is internalized and most noticeable in physical symptoms such as frequent flu-like symptoms including headache, stomachache, and even nausea.

Children under stress may regress to behaviors like bedwetting, clinginess, and frequent crying. Behavioral symptoms may be extreme at both ends of a behavior spectrum. A normally active child becomes either listless or hyperactive, a usually docile child has fits of anger or a child that "acts out" becomes docile and introspective.

Some signs of stress in kids are easily confused with problem behavior, but if schoolwork slides or your child's circle of

friends undergoes a drastic change, it may simply indicate a child's inability to handle a stressful situation.

Helping kids reduce stress

Children primarily learn by example. The best way to teach your child how to manage stress is by teaching them to develop skills and child-oriented stress management techniques that will help your kids recognize and manage their stressors.

✓ **Eat healthy.** A healthy body is better able to withstand stress-induced illness. Schedule regular meals and snack times. Don't allow your child to skip meals.

✓ **Vigorous exercise is a good stress reliever.** Just like adults, kids need time to unwind. If your kids are bound to video games, television, or a computer, get them on their feet by providing and encouraging the use of active toys like balls, punch bags, and bikes. If your child presently appears to be stressed, make a point of playing with them. Time spent with your kids is a great vehicle for getting them to open up the lines of communication.



Did You Know...

Physiologists have shown that one reason people are touchy, easily insulted or grieved, is that they go through life with jaws set, faces strained and muscles tense. This causes them to jump at the slightest noise, or the slightest insult to their egos. They say their nerves are on edge, but it is mainly their muscles, from eyelids to toes, that are jumping. When all your muscles are relaxed and at ease, your nerves ... will also be [more] at ease.

—Albert Edward Wiggam

✓ **Be clear in setting rules and consistent with discipline.** Kids live in a “black and white” world. Blurred guidelines and inconsistencies are even more confusing for them than they are for adults.

✓ **Gentle, physical touch is a great healer.** Sometimes a hug is worth more than a thousand words. Another physical stress reliever can be a gentle massage of your child’s neck and shoulders. Like you, your kids can also get knotted up with stress!

✓ **Learn to be a good listener.** When your child wants to talk about his or her problems, don’t criticize. In addition, it isn’t always necessary to give advice. Sometimes kids just need to talk. Encourage them with open-ended questions like, “So what happened next?” “How do you feel about that?”

✓ **Teach your kids that everyone (including you) makes mistakes.** A good start is admitting your mistakes to your children with an “I’m sorry!” or “My mistake!” when you goof-up. If the situation warrants, use personal examples of stressful situations you encountered during your childhood. Even if you were unsuccessful in dealing with your situation, you’ll teach your kids that you can learn from and even laugh at your own mistakes.

✓ **Finally, teach your kids stress relieving exercises** and help them find stress reducing games they can play to reduce their stress. Visit <http://www.stressmanagementtips.com> for stress reducing games, exercises and more! ⏪



Beat Stress

Stress is the trash of modern life—we all generate it—but if you don't dispose of it properly, it will pile up and overtake your life.—**Terri Guillemets**

Our anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, but only empties today of its strength.—**Charles H. Spurgeon**

Believing that you must do something perfectly is a recipe for stress, and you'll associate that stress with the task and thus condition yourself to avoid it.

—**Steve Pavlina**

Stress believes that everything is an emergency.—**Natalie Goldberg**

Stress is not what happens to us. It's our response to what happens. And response is something we can choose.

—**Maureen Killoran**

The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.—**William James**

If you focus on the negative in any situation, you can expect high stress levels. However, if you try to see the good in a situation, your stress levels will greatly diminish.—**Catherine Pulsifer**

Keep your sense of humor. There's enough stress in the rest of your life to let bad shots ruin a game you're supposed to enjoy.—**Amy Alcott**

For fast-acting relief, try slowing down.—**Lily Tomlin**

Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop.—**Ovid**

A 113-year-old man, when asked the secret of his longevity, replied, "When it rains, I let it."—**Author Unknown**