

10 Things You Can Do to Reduce Stress

Despite all the joy and pride being a parent brings parenthood can be draining - mentally, emotionally, and physically. Sometimes you may feel overwhelmed with all the unchecked items on your to-do list, or struggle with balancing your work and family responsibilities, or feel exhausted and frustrated by your toddler's temper tantrums. Whatever the source(s) may be, stress can make you feel more frustrated, overwhelmed, and many other negative emotions.

Stress can cause you to feel like you are not being the best parent you can be. While it is important to take care of your children, it is also important to take care of yourself. Taking 10 -15 minutes out of your day, whether it is at the beginning or right before you go to sleep, to give yourself time to destress can have positive, lasting effects on your daily life. We have compiled a few, simple ways to reduce stress. All can be done with minimal time commitments, but are even more helpful when done consistently!

1. Practice Meditation

Studies have shown that meditation has many positive effects on the body, including reducing stress. There are many forms that you can try, including breathing exercises and mindfulness. YouTube has a wealth of videos that you can explore and test to decide what kind of practice works best for you. Meditating doesn't have to be long, if you only can commit to 10 minutes in the morning, it can still be beneficial.



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2. Do Yoga

This mind and body practice combines physical exertion and exercises common in meditation: breathing control and using the mind to relax the tension in your muscles. Similar to meditation, there are many videos on YouTube spanning in difficulty and length of time to best fit your abilities and schedule.

3. Write in a journal

Writing in a journal can be a cathartic experience and another way to reduce stress. Your writing could be any focus you choose. Perhaps you want to write about the stressors in your life before bed. Putting your thoughts to paper and out of your mind can quiet your brain and help you fall asleep more easily. Or perhaps you choose to write in the morning, five things you are grateful for to enforce positive thinking throughout your day.

4. Listen to music

When was the last time you sat down, closed your eyes, and listened to your favorite music without distractions? Studies have shown that listening to music can help you feel calmer. You can switch up the music to see what makes you most relaxed. Studies have also shown that slow, instrumental music is particularly calming to many people, but listening to old favorites can also bring you positive feelings.

5. Go for a walk

Getting your body moving releases natural endorphins which help reduce stress levels, so even going for a short walk can help. Getting out of the house and into nature can be rejuvenating and refreshing.

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6. Create artwork

You don't have to be an amazing artist to enjoy being creative. Creating art, whether it's painting, sketching, or sculpting, can help make you feel more relaxed. Set aside some time every week to allow your creative juices to flow and lose yourself in your work. Play around with different styles of art to keep things fresh, or hone your skills in one particular type. Whatever you decide, don't worry about how good your art is! It just matters that you're doing it.

7. Enjoy aromatherapy

You might have an old diffuser lying around, or maybe a scented candle. Aromatherapy can take many forms, and it has gained popularity recently. Studies show that pleasing smells can help reduce stress levels and increase contentment. Particular scents can have different positive effects; lavender, for example, has been shown to promote sleep in both babies and adults. Set a time to relax in the scents; perhaps take a bath with a candle lit in the room or apply your favorite scented lotion before bed.

8. Give a hug

Comforting physical touch has all sorts of healthy benefits, from reducing anxiety and stress to lowering blood pressure. Make a point to hug your partner or your children every day. Everyone will benefit!

9. Talk to a friend

When you're feeling stressed, take a break to call a friend and talk about your problems. Good relationships with friends and loved ones are important to any healthy lifestyle. They're especially important when you're under a lot of stress. A reassuring voice, even for a minute, can put everything in perspective.

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10. Limit media and technology use

While news media keeps you informed about local area activities it can also be a source of stress. From constantly hearing about unrest around the world to ongoing chaos locally it can take a toll on your mind and body. Turn off ALL electronic devices for some time each day, including 30 to 60 minutes before bedtime. Make a conscious effort to spend less time in front of a screen – television, tablet, computer, and phone. Enjoy spending time with your family playing new games or learning new hobbies.

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Remember, taking time to reduce your stress will help you be the best parent you can be!



Originally posted on the Now What? Blog on 4.14.21 The Now What? Blog served for nearly 7 years to

- 1. Normalize parents seeking support and help as a manner of child abuse prevention*
- 2. Engage community in how they can work to prevent child abuse*
- 3. Work to build resiliency in families through promotion of the 5 protective factors*

Maybe you coach a baseball team or you help care for the neighbor kids from time to time. You are investing in the safety and security of the children in our community. Because it truly does take a village to raise our children, we want to offer the tools needed to bring awareness and education to preventing child abuse.

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