



15 Stress Management Strategies: Karen Kruzan, LISW-S,CPO-CD; K² Organizing, LLC

Stress is unavoidable, and in some cases even positive or helpful! The stress response can be triggered by a job loss, when involved in a competition or by living with too much clutter. Too much stress can lead to physical and psychological problems, so here are 15 tips to address stress.

1. **Identify:** Spend some time considering the course of your stress and identifying factors you can change.
2. **Avoid:** Whenever possible, limit your exposure to unwanted stress. Learn to say no and establish healthy boundaries with others.
3. **Spend Time with Loved Ones:** Human connection releases calming hormones in our bodies
4. **Challenge Your Thoughts:** Ask yourself if you are adding stress by seeing a situation as all-or-nothing or by piling on “should” statements.
5. **Gratitude:** Not feeling especially grateful? Simply *trying* to identify things that are going well can give you the same positive results as actually being grateful.
6. **Have Fun:** Laugh, sing, dance, or enjoy a hobby. Allow yourself time to recharge your batteries.
7. **Exercise:** Everything from a rigorous bike ride to yoga can help provide distraction, clear the stress hormones from your body, help you sleep better, and improve your mood.
8. **Get in nature:** Studies show a connection between spending even 10 minutes in nature and lower stress rates. No time to get away? Even looking at nature photos can work.
9. **Breath work:** Breathe in slowly for 5 counts from your diaphragm in through your nose and out slowly for 5 counts from your mouth.
10. **Journal:** You can journal to vent, or you can use it to identify sources of stress, how you react, and which coping strategies are effective for you.
11. **Skin Contact:** Human touch has a powerful impact on us. Holding her husband’s hand has been shown to lower a wife’s blood pressure. Hug someone or get a massage.
12. **Accept Your Feelings:** Instead of trying to make unpleasant feelings go away, recognize their existence as part of life and see if they are trying to tell you something.
13. **Visualization:** Close your eyes and picture yourself in a relaxing environment where you are calm and relaxed.
14. **5-5-5:** Take a deep breath and notice 5 things you see, 5 things you hear, and 5 things you feel.
15. **Self-compassion:** We often mistakenly believe that we must be hard on ourselves to get good results, when the opposite is true. Try treating yourself as compassionately as you treat others.