

# 10 Ways to Lower Your Stress

and live a happier, healthier life



With over 75% of Americans feeling the physical effects of stress it almost seems like being "stressed out" is the new norm in today's modern world. But just because something is common doesn't make it normal (or healthy for that matter!).

Making busy the new normal hasn't helped us one bit. People brag about being able to function on 4 hours of sleep, they go into work early and leave late, over-pack their schedules and have more obligations than they can meet.

Today our over-booked lives are full of stressors. One thing after another triggers our brain's stress responses, overrunning our minds and bodies with stress hormones and eventually catching up with our tired, sleep-deprived selves. In other words, being busy and stressed shouldn't be considered "normal." In fact, chronic stress can lead to a host of other problems (both mental and physical). So, it's time to put an end to stress and all that comes with it!

## **What is a stressor?**

A stressor is what triggers those feelings of uneasiness. Stressors can be situations, events, people, influences or anything else we might interpret as negative or threatening. *An example would be getting stuck in traffic on your way to work and missing the mandatory morning office meeting.*

There are two types of stressors; absolute stressors and relative stressors. Absolute stressors are what everyone is exposed to and what we can all agree causes stress (dangerous weather, crime, violence, death, loss, etc.). Relative stressors are individual triggers (city traffic, pressure from your boss, juggling school and work, parenting teenagers). Relative stressors can also be described as personal stressors because they are personally stressful to you. Think of it like this: Your boss is **your** stressor, but not your best friend's (we'll call her Jamie). Jamie doesn't know your boss, let alone work for them, so they aren't a relative stressor in Jamie's life.

Whether they are absolute or relative, stressors cause a release of stress hormones that can wreak havoc on your mind and body.

### **What stress does to the body.**

When you're stressed cortisol and adrenaline are released into your body by your adrenal glands. While these two hormones are useful in the event of a rare life-threatening encounter with a tiger, having these hormones released into the body on a regularly basis (due to chronic stressors) can change the structure and function of the brain.

Harvard and Stanford recently studied the effects of chronic stress on the body and found that stress is as damaging to your health as secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke!

Here are just some of the physical changes that take place when you experience chronic stress:

**Mental Health:** Chronic stress and the over-release of cortisol and adrenaline have been associated with [anxiety](#), [depression](#), [insomnia](#) and even [dementia](#).

**Thyroid Health:** Stress has been proven to trigger [autoimmune thyroid problems](#) and even cause thyroid resistance.

**Immune System:** Autoimmune conditions worsen during stressful life events.

**The Gut:** Did you know that your gut contains 95% of your serotonin (the hormone responsible for happy feelings)? Because stress is linked to gut conditions like [ulcers](#) and [IBS](#) it's no wonder we feel less happy when we're stressed.

**Heart Conditions:** Stress raises blood sugar which can put you at risk of heart problems.

**Weight Issues:** Chronic stress can slow your metabolism and increase cravings. Yes, stress is bad for your waistline too.

Now, don't let these worrisome side-effects of stress "stress you out". There is good news to come!

### **Can you eliminate stress?**

Stress is how you perceive a threat. Whether it's a real threat or not, stress is a result of your mind deciding that the threat is very real and needs your attention.

Here are 10 effective (and proven) ways to reduce stress. Follow these practices and you'll be able to eliminate chronic stress from your life and be all the healthier for it.

**Meditate:** One of the most common reasons why people want to learn meditation is to reduce stress.

Regular meditation can be very helpful in reducing chronic stress. In a nut shell, meditation is the practice of relaxing. There's much more to meditation than that, but for stress purposes, learning to relax the body and mind is incredibly beneficial.

Not only has meditation been studied as being beneficial to those who suffer from mental health, it's also been shown to create more positive outlooks and help people deal with life's stresses in a more healthful way.

**Journal:** Research has proven that journaling is effective in relieving worry by helping release emotions that would otherwise stay harbored. Researchers have even gone as far to say that the emotional benefits of journaling can increase longevity.

By putting pen to paper and reducing the amount of worrying you do, you can in turn reduce stress and anxiety. Not only should you be jotting down your emotions you should write with the intention of clarifying your thoughts, reflecting on your feelings, expressing your most frustrating emotions and releasing negativity.

**Find A Community:** Being part of a strong, uplifting community has the power to change your outlook on life. When you feel like you're lacking a support system you can wind up feeling alone.

As people we're stronger in a group. Before modern times, community was a matter of life and death. Whether you needed helping hands on the farm or relied on your tribe to help ward off predators, community was everything.

However, today we aren't faced with the same threats to our wellbeing so community has gone to the wayside. But we as human beings are still hardwired for connection through community. Without it we carry the weight of our world all on our own. We subconsciously know that we're at risk without a support system and this causes a great deal of stress.

Reach out and build relationships. Ask people close to you to check in with you regularly. Connect with old friends. Take a new class or volunteer. Make new friends at work. Engaging socially is the quickest way to manage your stress.

**Sleep:** Because lack of sleep influences stress you can significantly reduce your chronic stress by improving your sleep.

Consistency helps promote the production of melatonin (the natural chemical in your body that promotes sleep). By changing your bedtimes your body's process of producing melatonin is disrupted, so be consistent and go to bed at the same time every night.

In addition to being consistent with your bedtime eliminate distractions like devices and activities. To prepare yourself for a restful night's sleep turn off all devices (TV, tablets, phones, laptops, etc.). Also, no more late night snacking or finishing up paperwork while sitting in bed. Let your bed serve its purpose as a place of relaxation and sleep.

**Exercise:** There are many benefits to exercise, one of which is lowered levels of stress. Though exercise is meant to be physically demanding, it also has a way of relaxing you. Not only can it help take the edge off, it helps you forget the day's stresses through physical movement. In a way, it flushes the brain of all irritations that have built up over the course of the day.

Exercise also encourages the brain to produce endorphins. You've probably heard of a runner's high. Endorphins released during exercise are what cause those feelings of bliss after a workout.

**Take Time to Relax:** So often people jump from one stressor to another. They leave work early for a PTA meeting, leave the PTA meeting early for a last minute work meeting, go from their meeting to school pickup, to Basketball drop-off, to ballet drop-off, to cooking dinner, to finishing work from home.

When you don't take time to relax your stress levels never get a chance to subside. You keep yourself in a constant state of panic.

Include time for yourself in your weekly schedule. Call it your Happy Hour! Don't let any other obligations take up this time. It's yours to do with what you please. You'll be surprised at how happy you'll be looking forward to your weekly Happy Hour!

**Detox Your Brain:** Are you a news junkie? Are you a social media junkie? What you may not realize is once you consume something your mind doesn't let it go. It continues to think about what you just heard on the news or saw on your social media feed.

How often do you say "I heard on the news the other day..." or "Yesterday I read..." in conversation with someone? When you hear, read or see something that catches your attention you try to understand it by letting it roll around in your head and you remember it much longer than you realize. Imagine this; that everything you consume is bouncing around in your brain right now. The more you consume, the more that's up there taking up needless space and causing you needless worry.

**Remove Triggers:** Triggers come in all shapes and sizes. They can be anything from the kids spilling milk all over the kitchen floor to forgetting to finish payroll. Removing triggers (or reducing them... the reality is, milk will spill from time to time) is the single best way to reduce stress. The same way you can stop consuming so much media, you can also remove triggers from your life.

You may be thinking "But my boss is my trigger and I can't just quit my job!" No, you can't just up and quit your job, but you can take a good hard look at the pros vs. the cons of your job, ask yourself if it's worth the lack of sleep, frustration, long hours, etc. Could your skills be better used within another company? Would you be happier if you had a boss who recognized your hard work? Are there bigger, better and less stressful opportunities out there for you?

How do you remove triggers such as spilled milk? Spilled milk isn't the cause of your chronic stress. If life wasn't overwhelming, spilled milk might turn into a funny moment with the kids. Focus on the root of your triggers (i.e. you're late for work and don't have time for anything to go wrong).

**Accept What You Can't Change:** Trying to control the uncontrollable is, well, impossible. Accepting things as they are is difficult, especially when you're faced with loss, illness, catastrophes, etc.

Even though it's difficult, acceptance is the best way to let go of stressing over things that can't be controlled. Look for the upside instead. Major challenges are accompanied by opportunities.

By applying these 10 stress-relieving practices to your life you'll not only lower your risk of stress related illnesses, you'll also be making room in your life for more joy and happiness.

Be proactive in reducing your stress by using the Stress Management Checklist below!

### Stress Management Checklist

Today I...	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	Notes:
Meditated for 15 min or more.								
Wrote down my feelings in my journal.								
Spent time with people who build me up.								
Got a good night's sleep and feel rested.								
Exercised for 30 min or more.								
Gave myself a Happy Hour.								
Eliminated excessive noise (TV, phone, etc.).								
Stayed far away from triggers.								
Accepted what I couldn't change.								

CONNECT WITH  
**LYNN BRYSON**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about Lynn Bryson,  
her teachings, products and availability,  
visit the link below or reach out to her and  
her team via email.

Lynn Bryson  
10061 Riverside Dr.  
Toluca Lake, CA 91602

E-Mail: [lynn@lynnbryson.com](mailto:lynn@lynnbryson.com)  
[www.LynnBryson.com](http://www.LynnBryson.com)