

Unusual Ways to Manage Your Stress

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Are you tired of reading about the same old methods used to manage stress? They're all great ideas – yoga, cardiovascular exercise, meditation, get more sleep and time management rules can certainly relieve stress.

But there are some other ways to get you out of your stress rut that can be fun and very doable. These methods can spur you on to other ways, such as improving your health and positive thinking.

First, try out some unusual ways to crack the stress barrier and see if they work for you. Finding ways to make you laugh, being with your stress feelings to find out more about them and setting about on a new and vastly different plan for your everyday life are just some of the unconventional, stress-relief methods that can virtually shake you out of your rut.

Chapter 1: Set Aside Time for Intentional Stress

Most stress-management advice is for those feeling stress to avoid it like the plague. Keep those negative thoughts at bay and think positive. But what if you decided to look stress straight in the eye and let yourself worry and fret for a while – just to get it out of your system?

By confronting stress, you're looking at it with fresh eyes rather than turning away and letting it come back, stronger than ever, to try to pull you down. When you get to the crux of what's bothering you, it may be easier to find a solution.

The solution may be among the normal stress relievers such as taking a hot bath, walk, swim, meditation or other method. Confronting stress doesn't mean you're ignoring it, but it does mean that you're setting aside time to deal with it and come away with a plan.

Talking about stressful situations is one of the best ways to figure out ways to deal with it. For example, if your children are stressed because you moved to a new location and they need to transfer to a new school, set aside time to be with them – individually or together – to find ways to make them feel better by finding solutions.

Maybe in your conversation about beginning a new school, you could suggest a before-school party or event at your home or nearby and invite some of the kids in the neighborhood or from a class list you could get from school.

Moving is stressful for everyone in the family, but together you can find ways to deal with the stress by talking about fears and frustrations. What you learn by confronting stress with your kids might help you with your own concerns and stress.

Making the move to confront stress intentionally helps you come away with more confidence that you can work through any problems you may be having at work, in relationships, with family or other situations.

You're seeing stress for what it is – like turning on a light. It's like hitting a loaded piñata with a baseball bat. Once it falls apart and you can see what's in it, you can decide what you want to keep and what you can throw or give away.

Another good thing that can come from setting aside time to face your stress is that you'll get better in touch with your symptoms and will then be able to find the best solution.

For example, if your neck and shoulders ache you may realize that too much stress at work is making you tense and uncomfortable. Maybe the solution will be to take more breaks, engage in some neck and shoulder exercises or simply take a walk to relieve the tension.

It's difficult to take time out of a project when you're being productive, but it can make an incredible difference in your body stress. Long-term stress on the body is known to perpetuate serious health problems, so it's

imperative to confront stress that could affect digestive, muscle, heart and immune system.

As you know, stress can also cause mental as well as physical problems. Lack of mental acuity can make you less productive and more prone to accidents. By confronting the stress that causes mental slowdowns, you can find ways to adapt or fight the stress and regain your mental alertness.

Those who experience frequent bouts of acute stress, such as police officers don't usually have long-term medical or mental repercussions from the episodes. An ongoing type of stress such as too many irons in the fire and constant worry can lead to cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure.

When you feel the world crashing in around you from worry and tensions caused by too many commitments, taking the time to face the stress issues head-on can help you find ways to cope.

If you continue to sweep chronic stress under the rug, a final breakdown may occur – meaning that you could be subject to a great deal of physical harm, plus becoming prone to violence and suicidal thoughts.

Seek help from a therapist to talk about your stress if you feel you can't handle it on your own. It's a good way to get all of your feelings and thoughts that are causing stress out in the open so you can find solutions.

After PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) such as an accident or physical and mental abuse, many people need help to deal with lingering after effects. Don't be afraid to ask for help if your efforts for dealing with intentional stress don't work.

Chapter 2: Isolate Yourself from Others

Toxic people and toxic times can rob you of your inner peace. It may be a good idea to isolate yourself from others for a while and experience a therapeutic distancing to get your head together.

Temporarily removing yourself from the action can help you find solutions to what and who are bugging you. It's not being mean and it doesn't have to be permanent. Consider it a way to deal with ongoing stress that's keeping you in constant chaos.

News and violent shows on television often cause stress that you can carry with you to work and in relationships and can even interrupt your sleep. Take a break from these toxic elements in your life from time to time and get back to what is beautiful in life.

Take a walk (sans cell phone) to enjoy the beauty of nature and concentrate on the peace surrounding you. Playing with a pet or children can also be a therapeutic distraction from all the chaos going on in your life and give you a new outlook on what life is really all about.

Clear your mind by engrossing yourself in a hobby or activity that makes you happy and helps you feel a sense of accomplishment. Let your mind wander and get away from the chaos of everyday life to concentrate on something beautiful and lasting.

If you can afford a trip, it can be a great mind and body booster to book yourself into a resort or other place where you can indulge yourself in everything that makes you happy – without having to answer to anyone.

Find a quiet place and try to spend a day there if you can't afford an alone trip. It's okay to tell your family and friends that you're going to spend a day in your room just chilling and reenergizing.

You can't always avoid toxic people in your life. You may have a boss or supervisor you despise and who makes you cringe when he or she is around and that can affect your productivity and your attitude towards the entire job.

Others, such as a long-time friend or family member can usually be avoided, but that may cause another type of stress if the person is offended. No matter what the other person thinks of your brief hiatus, it's

important that you take the time needed to de-stress for peace of mind and your health, both mental and physical.

Needing to stay in contact with an elderly person who is draining you with complaints and neediness might be solved by isolating yourself from her or him physically, but limiting your involvement to texting if you can.

Often, people will nag and become even needier if they sense you're stepping back. This is when consistency needs to come into play. Rather than sending mixed messages, be kind, but clear about how you need some time for yourself and stick to it.

Yo-yoing back and forth because you feel guilty and he or she feels a sense of abandonment doesn't relieve the stress in your life, but only makes it worse. At the end of the day, you both may grow and become more independent from the experience.

Isolating yourself from others for your mental and physical health doesn't always have to mean going into solitude. There may be other people in your daily life who are consistent up-lifters and have the ability to make you laugh and feel good about yourself.

Getting together for games such as volleyball, bridge or simply a day out with friends can help to isolate from the stressful goings-on in your life and make you aware of the truly great friendships and camaraderie you have elsewhere in your life.

Some people just enjoy living in chaos and they can pass it on to you if you don't take a stance. Rather than engaging in the unnecessary chatter and button-pushing with these people, take a step back and view it as a disinterested third party.

Getting involved in the fray that chaos causes, you can approach the situation with a more rational viewpoint and stand more of a chance of convincing others that your ideas are best and most well thought out.

You can also remove yourself from toxic people by simply not participating in the garble. If you normally get caught up in conversations

about politics or office gossip, try to keep from being sucked into the fray by turning away or inventing an important event you have to attend.

Energy vampires abound. They can be people or things (like the computer or television). These energy-drainers can be needy, chaotic or addictive and they can drain us with their neediness, chaotic lifestyle and other behavior that sucks your energy dry if you let them.

While you can't always steer clear of these people, you can try to limit your interactions with them. If you deem these relationships or things too expensive for your well-being, you may need to find a way to move on.

The most important thing is that you look out for your own emotional health and that means limiting the time you spend with these energy vampires. We're all in constant states of changing and sometimes it's best to distance yourself from some people and circumstances that no longer work.

Chapter 3: Find a Break Room

This is not your normal break room like you would find in an office building. These literal break rooms are sometimes called rage rooms and they're popping up all over. It's a room designed for people to take out their anger and rages on inanimate objects.

In your own private room, you can smash televisions, old computers, dishes, wine and beer bottles and more with sledge hammers and other objects to relieve tension. If you've ever felt the need to smash or throw something, this is the place to do it without getting in trouble or breaking something you'll later regret.

For a small fee, you can release the anger pent up from being in traffic, a relationship argument, work-related stresses and more. Many people are finding it a great replacement for the more sedate methods of shouting into your pillow or turning up the music in your car to blasting tempos.

Some of these pop-up rage rooms feature parties, where you can plan to have your entire office for a party to take out your rage on objects rather than each other. Office equipment (including desks and chairs) are set up for destruction and you can smash to your heart's content.

Most rage rooms provide safety goggles for the eyes, gloves and a Hazmet-type covering for your body – or at least long sleeves and pants. You are required to wear close-toed shoes for the excursion.

Rage room owners get their smash items from charities who have too much of one thing such as computers and televisions and old dishes. They either purchase the items or get donations from people who want to simply get rid of them.

Owners of rage rooms are finding that many couples are choosing them for a date night event. It's an unusual and healthy way to get rid of tension and laugh and have great fodder for conversation.

These days, some of the most popular items include effigies of political figures. Most times, they're totally destroyed by the end of the evening, so the owners have to keep a supply on hand.

The rage rooms usually have bats and crowbars on hand for smashing the items and a menu of items you can choose to add on to the session and destroy. Sessions begin with a fee for smashing some electronic items and dishes.

You can also choose to add on other articles such as large screen televisions and cellphones for a small fee. Or, bring an item or two of your own such as a picture of your ex or your boss.

It's amazingly cathartic to get to carry out your anger on inanimate objects by violently breaking them to pieces. Anything that will take the edge off the frustration that builds up in everyday life can be a great stress reliever.

Some rage rooms even video the session for you so you can watch what you did in your state of fury later on. You can even choose background music for your release of anger from hard rock to classical.

Psychologists are varied in whether giving in to your baser angry desires is good for you or not. Some prefer and recommend more gentle techniques like deep breathing or imagery to control rage.

But most people seem to be using the rage rooms for fun and claim that it keeps them from reaching a breaking point in their emotions. Problems are pulverized and they can walk away with a new attitude, leaving the anger behind on the rage room floor.

It's certainly not for everyone, but it seems to work for others. Rappers and other entertainers often go around smashing items in their videos and it's caught on with others who seem to get a thrill from watching it.

Whether you've been divorced, fired, dumped, cut off in traffic or are just curious about rage rooms, they're the place many people are finding helpful to de-stress. Many rage rooms have been so successful that they're branching out into other cities and states.

One surprising fact the owners of these rooms have noticed is that women are their main customers. Past and present etiquette dictate that women should be more calm and demure, but that's not the case when they come to vent their anger.

Women used to beat down bread dough to take out their frustrations. Now, they can visit an anger room and really let the rage flow. It's not for everyone, but now seems to be the time when taking out anger on inanimate objects is set to take off.

With all the violent crimes being committed in today's world, it would be great if there were places to go to vent anger rather than being violent with family, friends and others who simply get in your way on the highway.

Now, there are places where you can. You'll likely find a rage room near you, but if not, be patient. It's probably coming soon. Breaking things in a violent manner goes back to our primal needs.

But committing violent acts in public or around people you care for can cause problems you don't need. A rage room can help you neutralize all your frustrations without lashing out at others.

Chapter 4: Take Up Dance Movement Therapy

Experts have known for a long time that Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) is an excellent form of therapy for those with Down syndrome and autism where communication by movement is necessary.

Now, DMT is considered an unusual form of therapy that diverts from the traditional style of oral therapy. It can help you achieve cognitive, physical and emotional benefits and also help reduce stress, prevent diseases and manage anger.

The added benefits of dance therapy are that your muscle tone and strength will improve and you'll get a healthy dose of self-esteem. You're able to express yourself freely in a safe space and do it without judgment from others.

Dance therapy can improve the way you see your body and boost communication skills. Also, use it to address such physical problems as arthritis, heart disease, chronic pain, obesity and cancer.

Or, use it with typical oral therapy to lessen symptoms of depression, anxiety, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and eating disorders. Medical experts are also finding that it can help with dementia and other communication disorders.

Dance therapy is an effective method for almost every mental and physical health issue. The sessions can either be structure or free-form and done in groups or individually. One of the key principles of DMT is that what happens to the body also affects the mind – and vice-versa.

The free-form type of dance therapy lets you express your own feelings by moving in ways that help free your mind and body from the normal ways of moving and thinking. Normal dance moves are also beneficial to the mind and body, but therapeutic-type dancing takes it to the next level.

DMT is a language of movement – dependent on physical moves rather than a spoken language. It has been a type of therapy for the past century, when ideas formed that took dance beyond the arena of entertainment.

It emerged as a form of expression and a way to communicate that eventually created DMT. All dance therapists must know the theories of psychodynamics, Gestalt and humanistic and all must have training and certification in dance movement therapy.

When you research DMT, you'll find that link between the body and soul. The connection that DMT focuses on is intrinsic to movement being vital to our health and mental well-being.

It's a well-known fact that movement of the body facilitates endorphins that can lift your mood and help you sleep better. It's now known that regular movement helps you maintain a higher energy level and resist caving in to the emotional or mental challenges life throws at you.

You'll find varied programs in the realm of DMT. Many focus on the more traditional forms of dance movement such as ballroom dancing while others promote movements much like you'd find in yoga – slow and deliberate stretching and other movements to calm the mind and body.

By building self-esteem through expressive movements, you're achieving emotional and physical benefits that include mood management and improvement of cognitive abilities. As you learn how to be more communicative with movements, your relationship skills may improve.

Those who teach and participate in dance therapy realize that it's not only the exercise that helps – it's the fluidity of the movements and type of

movements. Therapists know how to interpret these moves and can then intervene to meet the needs of the client.

One intervention style of therapists might be to mirror the person's movements as the person is dancing. This promotes a validation in the client's mind of what he or she is feeling by matching the expressive movements.

Through dance movement therapy, you'll be able to release the toxic feelings and experiences and finally heal your emotions. Since it fosters long-lasting change, you can go on with your life without the baggage that keeps you from success.

You'll also learn to trust yourself and your abilities to make positive changes in your life and live authentically rather than bowing to the needs and wants of others. Understanding yourself is a part of recovery from depression, anxiety and other forms of doubting yourself and let you continue on the journey of recovery.

If dance movement therapy interests you as a way to reduce stress and get in touch with your inner self, research the treatment centers near your home. Many times, this type of therapy can be found through eating disorder therapists.

Sessions will vary according to the therapist and what he or she is trying to accomplish and it's important to find the one that suits your needs. Research online about the various forms of dance movement therapy and decide which you'd like to try.

Chapter 5: Tap into Your Inner Tween with Stress Relieving Slime

It's been called a boredom-buster and stress-reliever for tweens – but you, as an adult, can get the same stress-relieving benefits when you delve into the tween world of slime. You may have seen it first on the Nickelodeon during the 90s.

Celebrities and others were slimed with green ooze as they struggled to find a way to get out and away from the sudden onslaught. Now, that neon green slime can be made in your own home and can be any color you like.

Making and manipulating slime is simple and lots of fun. It's the perfect activity for relieving stress you may have suffered at work, on the freeway or the fast-paced world in which we live.

It's easy to make – using very few ingredients that you may find at home. School glue, shaving cream and contact lens solution are just a few of the slime ingredients and you can vary it with recipes you find online.

You can also order slime kits such as Nickelodeon Slime which contains all the stuff you need to make gooey, neon or glowing slime. Or, make airy, white, fluffy snow slime by mixing one part school glue with one part shaving cream.

Then, add contact lens solution just one teaspoon at a time until the slime begins to unstick from the mixing bowl. Now, you're ready to play with your slime. There are numerous recipes you can find online and they're amazingly inexpensive and fun to make.

Slime is a wonderful way to help children with many skills such as emotions, senses, eye-hand coordination and more. As a stress-reliever, slime can help adults get their frustrations out and get their minds off problems.

The gooey, highly manipulating substance is soothing, calming and creative. You can make anything you want from it – or nothing. Just the simple act of squeezing and shaping it can help you pour all your problems into it and then forget them.

Anti-stress items are best-sellers and recommended by therapists to people who need stress-relief. It's an inexpensive way to combat stress and it's readily available and very inexpensive.

Items such as stress balls that are malleable in your hands have long been used to relieve stress and even help with coordination. Spinner fidget

cubes are also online best-sellers for stress relief and squishy toys are also popular.

Slime kits are bestsellers on Amazon and they're inexpensive enough for everyone to enjoy. There are kits such as those that contain glittery slime and others with delightful smells such as watermelon and cotton candy.

Some websites let you create your own slime. You choose the scent, type, color, texture and more if you want to create any slime you can imagine. You can even get recipes and other fun stuff to add.

You may wonder what the hoopla is all about when it comes to slime, but once you dip your hands into the gooey blob and begin to manipulate it, you'll be amazed how your stress evaporates.

It's as if the slime absorbs the stress and leaves you calm and collected. The science behind that feeling is that you're transferring your thought process to the slime rather than focusing on your problems.

As you manipulate the slime in your hands, your mind can't help but relax at the feelings you're experiencing and help you stay calm and relax. It essentially frees your mind and helps your health by reducing overall stress that's to blame for high blood pressure and blood glucose levels.

You can let your mind soar to a creative place where all things are possible. When you think about what you want to create with the slime you're releasing stress-relieving endorphins that promote emotional well-being.

Stress relieving techniques such as slime have also been proven to help people overcome physical and mental barriers such as intense pain.

Many slime concoctions contain essential oils and herbs that are also instrumental in helping you relax. Lavender, vanilla and other essential oils are well known for their abilities to induce calm and relaxation to help you sleep.

Other oils and herbs can help to heal and sooth your skin as you manipulate the slime. They may contain coco butter and mineral oils or other ingredients contained in many medical skin treatments.

Slime is actually part of a modern group of items called fidget widgets. Stress balls, slime and other fidget products helps to distract your mind from the trauma and troubles of everyday life and helps you put your life more in perspective.

Mixing, pulling and pulling slime is an inexpensive and therapeutic way to leave your daily concerns behind and give your mind a vacation. Schools are promoting slime as a healthy way to relieve student stress.

Some schools are offering stress workshops where slime is featured as a viable way to get stress relief from finals and other problems found in the student culture. While slime isn't the entire answer for stress relief, it can be highly instrumental in the big picture. Try slime-therapy as a fun and inexpensive stress reliever in your life.

Chapter 6: Listen to or Watch Some ASMR

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) is all the rage on YouTube. ASMR is a tingling sensation caused by audio and visual stimulation. It's a pleasant sensation that can help its followers get better sleep and stress-relief.

ASMR has sometimes been compared with having goose bumps, but since goose bumps can also be uncomfortable – like nails against a chalkboard – that's not considered a very good comparison.

The sensation is more like a pleasant feeling you have when you experience something beautiful, like someone giving you a massage – or thinking something beautiful, like memories with loved ones.

The feelings have always been there, but the term, ASMR came into being in 2010. Now, ASMR is known as a brain orgasm because it provides gratification, but without any sexual connection.

Some people say it's a tingling sensation that begins in the neck and head area and can also move to the arms and legs. They may come in pulse-like tinglings or waves that are like chills (but pleasant).

One study broke down the words in ASMR to refer to certain meanings. Autonomous (A) means that the sensation is spontaneous and that the recipient of the sensation could not control the feeling.

Sensory (S) in ASMR refers to the sensation or the reaction of the senses to the stimulation. Meridian (M) signifies the highest point that the sensation reaches or the peak of the feeling.

Response (R) is the response you have as a reaction to something happening externally or internally. These explanations for the words in ASMR are widely used now when discussing this type of therapy.

One person may react more to sights and sounds while others get ASMR feelings from smells or textures. Everyone is different, but they all seem to work when they are silent and repetitive.

If you've ever gotten chills from someone whispering in your ear, that was ASMR. Rain or brushing your hair can also cause the sensations as can soft tapping or doing something repetitive such as folding clothes.

Many followers of ASMR use it for relaxation purposes while others may use it for sleep inducement and stress relief. You may remember when listening to various sounds on CDs were all the rage as a relaxation technique.

Such peaceful sounds as crashing ocean waves and gentle breezes through the trees have lulled people to sleep for years. Now, videos – especially those on YouTube have become popular to use for ephemeral purposes.

The sensation of ASMR lets people become lost in the moment, without cares and worries and totally concentrating on the sensations they're

hearing and seeing. All the videos feature soft and soothing sounds and the person in the video only moves slowly, if at all.

After most people experience the beauty and feelings of ASMR, they tend to explore their options even more. That's the reason for its high popularity on YouTube and many are making great money from producing the videos.

While ASMR is considered only a temporary fix by experts, it does help to relieve symptoms of depression for a while and the relief does help promote a sense of well-being.

Scientists are now studying how ASMR could be used as a tool to treat conditions like panic/anxiety disorders, stress and insomnia. Since everyone experiences ASMR triggers differently, a study of the brain is necessary to see if it's a viable treatment.

Although the ASMR triggers vary, the most popular ones are white noise, whispers, lips smacking, gentle brush sounds and tapping. The ASMR videos on YouTube are made up mostly of women who may be playacting that they're giving you a massage.

Running a soft-bristled brush over the microphone is also a popular ASMR and whispering softly is another. One particular YouTube video – featuring a woman eating pickles – was viewed over five million times.

When people were asked why they chose to watch ASMR videos, most replied they enjoy the relaxation it provides and some said it helps them sleep. A small percentage viewed the videos for sexual stimulation.

Even though there isn't a lot of information and facts about ASMR, most agree that based on what we already know, more investigative studies should be done to find out if it's a viable therapy tool.

Chapter 7: Engage in Mindful Chores

Washing dishes may not be on your list of things you like to do, but if you have stress in your life and just happen to have dishes in the sink, you may be able to kill two birds with one stone.

Studies show that engaging in the act of washing dishes and other mindful chores can lower your stress level. Mindful (how things appear and feel) and descriptive (bare bones description of washing dishes) passages about washing dishes were shown separately to two groups of over fifty students who then engaged in washing dishes.

Those students who read the descriptive explanation got no stress-relieving benefits from the chore. Those who washed dishes after reading a mindfulness passage were more mentally prepared for the task and stress levels were reduced.

When you approach a chore or work task you must tackle, approaching it mindfully can open up many more possibilities to finishing the task successfully. For example, those who washed dishes mindfully were focusing on the smell of the soap, temperature of the water and the feel of the dishes.

Not only does the mindful experience help you finish the task with a better attitude, but it also improves your awareness and state of mind during and after the chore. You may have the same awareness by raking leaves or dusting furniture.

Mindfulness is much like meditation in that you direct your mind on what to do and think. As you progress in developing the skills to focus and concentrate, you'll notice that it's happening in other areas of your life too.

You may become more productive at work because you now have the ability to put all your attention on to the task at hand. Things go faster and you learn so much more than when you're multi-tasking.

Stress in your life is sure to be reduced when you can practice mindfulness to get rid of the debilitating anxiety that plagues us all when faced with uncomfortable situations. Practicing mindfulness when doing chores helps to change the wiring the brain.

Changing how the brain functions and reacts to stress in your life teaches it and forms it into an actual tool for relieving stress. When you're living in a state of mindfulness, you can also become mindful of biases and change those which may be destructive or adverse to you.

For example, some biases are normal, such as having a preference for the sort of programs you watch on television. Others, such as those that pertain to race or gender can cause problems in various life situations.

When you're mindful of what you're thinking and feeling, you can decrease the harmful biases that pop up in your mind and override it with logic and reason. This has much to do with controlling your thoughts rather than letting them control you.

Being mindful while performing chores or mundane tasks is a way to train your mind to react in better ways to certain life situations. When you're bombarded with negative thoughts and you let your mind race away with them, you risk falling in to a depressive state.

Mindfulness is a recognized type of therapy based on some basics from cognitive therapy and MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction). From these two elements, MBCT (Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy) – can help reduce depression caused from stress and anxiety.

It includes homework on a daily basis where you practice mindfulness exercises such as awareness of your body movements and feelings, mindful eating, household chores and yoga.

Your full attention is given to each task or thing you're doing in each and every moment. You're taught how to respond to negative thoughts that usually accompany depression, plus feelings and destructive beliefs about yourself and others.

In studies, mindfulness therapy is found to be as effective for some as antidepressant medications and keeps those who are prone to depression from slipping back into a depressive condition.

Among women, dissatisfaction with the body image is a negative force that causes discontent among all ages of women. One study followed a group of women practicing mindfulness in everything they do and another group that did not for three weeks.

At the completion of the study, it was determined that those practicing mindfulness on a constant basis felt better about their appearances and also felt more compassion and less body shame.

Studies have also been done following people who have cognitive issues. Mindfulness therapy was found to improve visual-spatial abilities and also decrease fatigue and anxiety. Attention span and working memory was enhanced after the mindfulness training.

Many people have trouble keeping their minds from becoming distracted from a task or chore. Mindfulness therapy trains the mind to focus and concentrate, reducing the ability of distractions to rob our attention.

Making mindfulness a part of your life takes practice, but once you get the hang of it, many things are possible. Getting your mind off daily trials and troubles is a healthy and productive way to keep depression and anxiety at bay.

Commit mindfulness to a daily practice by beginning for a couple of minutes per day and you'll likely want to increase the time in a very short while. Reaching a true state of mindfulness can transform your life by helping you learn to live in the moment.

Try to make mindfulness a part of your daily life when performing mundane chores, eating and allowing negative thoughts to permeate your mind. Books and courses you can take on mindfulness abound, both online and in book stores – including YouTube videos.

Chapter 8: Befriend Your Stress

Stress has always gotten a bad rap for causing problems with your health and emotions. But when you befriend your stressed feelings by taking the time to get to know it, you may be able to reveal much about yourself.

Things or situations that you care deeply about, challenges you face, relationship issues and much more can be very telling when you examine your stressful feelings and symptoms.

Humans were originally given stress as a way to save their lives. The fight-or-flight instinct is stressful, but when you're chased by wild animals, it's a good stress problem to have. Now, we're not as concerned about getting away from harm.

Yet, that same instinct is there and might be manifested in other challenges you face. Studies have indicated that stress isn't all bad. It can make you happier with your life, stronger to face obstacles and smarter in finding ways to deal with them.

Embracing your stress to learn from it isn't easy for most of us, but it may help you develop resilience, powerful mindset and a determination to shape your own reality rather than letting circumstances shape you.

Stress can be the catalyst to improve relationships, connect with others, focus on productivity and gain more energy to tackle challenges in your life. Understanding why you're feeling stress is the first step in gaining control over it – and over your own life.

You can even use stress to move you into success mode and turn undesirable situations into productive and satisfying ones. You've likely known people who seem to thrive when under pressure.

They've learned the secret in using stress as a resource to be productive rather than letting it thwart personal progress. Controlling stress in your life rather than letting it control you means changing your mindset.

As soon as you manage that, it's possible to call on resources that are best for handling stress. Stress is often thought of as a problem that's difficult, if not impossible, to get rid of. It's an intrinsic part of life.

But when you think of stress as a way to propel yourself into creativity and productivity, it becomes a path to get what you want – to the success you've always dreamed of. It provides a sense of urgency and courage to follow through rather than give in to the discomfort of the situation.

Insight into the causes of stress in your life can also be beneficial in plotting your response using a positive mindset. A positive mindset can produce excellence in individuals and help them achieve more than they ever thought possible.

Stress is often seen as discomfort. You may think that any situation causing discomfort should be avoided, but when you have insight into the cause of the discomfort, you are then able to find the courage to handle it.

Those who have learned how to use stress to their advantage include soldiers, police men and women and others who work in highly dangerous or pressured environments. They thrive on adversity because they approach it with a can-do mindset.

Discovering the secrets in stress can help you in many ways. By conquering your fears of challenging stress, you'll come away with self-confidence that can help you grow and flourish in any situation that comes your way.

Viewing stress as a friend and embracing its influence can unlock the benefits stress can have in your life. When you master that, you'll also change the way you think about life, stress and many of the other problems that plague you and keep you from success.

It's difficult to think that stress can actually offer health benefits rather than put you at risk for many harmful conditions. But when you change your mind-set about stress and let it spur you on to action rather than paralyze you from fear, the message of stress becomes clear.

Rethink your feelings and actions about how you respond to stress and think more about how you can use the stress in your life to transform it. Moving on from problematic situations and toxicity in your life helps you live in the moment rather than the past.

If you're having stress from thinking of past, negative situations, using the old methods of denial and escape may not be working for you. Changing your response might take some practice, but when you master the method, it can change your life in many positive ways.

Another thing to remember when addressing stress is that certain situations may be considered negatively stressful by some, but not others. The perception of stress in your life plays a large role in how you address it.

If you learn that all stress isn't bad for you and can be a way to engage in life in a meaningful way and use it as a tool to grow, it can be life-changing. Readjusting your mindset about stress in your life can help you meet challenges head-on rather than shrink away from them.

Both willpower and wisdom can be found when you approach stress as a way to gain insight into what makes you tick. You can then transform the stress in your life to something meaningful and put your mindset in a position of power.

Chapter 9: Find a Fractal and Focus on It!

A fractal may sound like something you'd encounter in a high school math class. It does have to do with math, but in psychology, it's used to explain patterns. Fractals in nature might be flowers, ocean waves and snowflakes.

In the realm of art, fractals can be swirls or other elements in a painting that are repeated throughout. Fractals can make an impact on the stress in your life by providing a relaxation technique that calms and promotes happiness.

Psychological research concerning how fractals affect stress has been extensively performed using equipment that tracks eye movements. FMRI imaging and other types of brain measurements indicate how and why people respond to certain fractals found in nature.

The findings concluded that when people were exposed to nature's or art's fractal patterns, their stress levels were reduced significantly. It's caused from the eye responding to a physiological resonance in the eye.

Now studies are determining if particular landscapes or architectural designs can play a part in relaxation. Doctors and dentists sometimes use murals of nature and calm places on the walls or ceilings of their offices that bring a calming effect to their patients.

Using fractals in your own life can make you feel happy and content. All you need to do is pay attention to the fractals in your life. Walking in a park or garden, watching cloud formations for a while and even the old childhood fun of blowing bubbles can be a relaxation technique that's inexpensive and calming.

Experiment with fractals as a relaxation tool. Try the above suggestions, music and other means of creating patterns in your mind. Pay close attention to your stress levels both before and after the experience with the fractals.

Some people who use fractals on a daily basis claim it's a wonderful way to tap in to your potential. It's a way to replace negative thoughts with positive ones and empower yourself by rooting out beliefs that limit and hold you back.

Fractals are also used by artists and other creative people to unlock creativity in their respective careers. They can help to rid the psyche of blocks to accomplishments such as success, love and relationships.

Other ways using fractals in your daily life might help are with sleeplessness, addiction and other areas of life that depend on the subconscious for reinforcement. Music has been a factor in calming and stress management purposes for a long time.

While faster tempo music can make you feel optimistic and more energetic, slower music can calm and soothe you, relaxing your muscles and relieving any stress you may feel.

Alpha brainwaves happen when a person is relaxed, and music can change brainwaves to alpha within about 45 minutes of listening to soothing music. Studies have found that music works the same as calming medication for relaxation purposes.

Fractals are present in Celtic, Indian, Native American, flutes and string instruments and nature sounds such as thunder and rain are also considered relaxation fractals. For some people, all sounds are simply irritating and not relaxing.

So, if listening to a particular type or beat of music isn't for you, try another type of fractal – or you might find that visual fractals are more relaxing. Pay attention to the patterns when you listen or visually enjoy them and how it makes you feel.

As stress in our lives become more pronounced, it's important that we find methods of relaxation that doesn't require medication and that we can use during certain stressful moments.

For example, you couldn't visually become engaged with fractals if you're stuck in traffic, but you could listen to music with fractal patterns. Try different types and styles of fractals and see which work for you.

Also, research and experiment with other types of relaxation such as meditation and yoga. Everyone is different and the way we relate to methods of relaxation is a trial-and-error experiment.

Scientifically, fractals are just moving out of the mathematic realm and getting the attention of psychologists who are using it for their patients. Move studies are being performed and much is to be learned about fractals as a psychological method of relaxation.

Fractals are another method of relaxation you may want to try if nothing else seems to work. It's a method that is now being researched as a way to further a person's relaxation and calming abilities without having to resort to harmful drugs.

Chapter 10: Play a Prank or Do a Good Deed

Planning and playing a prank on others is a good way to have fun and laugh – as long as they're really fun and not intended to make others feel bad. Good deeds are in the same category as playing pranks and they can also lift your spirits and help others.

The laughter you gain from pranks also boosts your body's health. You've likely heard the expression – laughter is the best medicine – and it's true that doctors and researchers know that laughter truly does boost your mood.

People who laugh a lot might also be healthier than those who don't. The laughter and fun you have with a good-natured prank can help you develop a more positive attitude and helps develop good relationships with others.

Although no one can yet say whether or not laughter might affect your health and make you feel better, it doesn't hurt you and is worth doing more of. When you laugh, several things happen to your body.

Your skin/muscles are stretched around the face and you breathe more rapidly which in turn sends oxygen into your tissues, keeping it looking young and healthy. The effects of laughter are similar to an exercise workout and give you a bit of a cardio-workout.

Laughter can also burn calories – as many as 50 calories for every ten to fifteen minutes of laughter. Don't abandon your workout routine though – losing a pound would mean you'd have to laugh constantly for about twelve hours.

Among the benefits of laughter, you might get from playing good-natured pranks include increased blood flow. The vessels expand and contract at a normal rate, whereas if you're stressed, blood flow becomes constricted.

Stress can cause a decrease in your immune system's ability to respond to illnesses. Laughter can raise the level of antibodies in the body that are associated with fighting infection and also increase the manufacture of immune cells.

Your blood sugar levels may also be decreased by laughter. And, laughter may also affect the quality of sleep you get. Pain can be lessened by laughter too and can also be a great relaxation technique.

The jury is still out of whether or not laughter might boost your energy level. Playing pranks produces a certain amount of adrenalin that may lead to more energy – at least during the time of planning and carrying out the prank.

Another phenomenon – doing good deeds – is also a way to lift your spirits and gain self-esteem. Random acts of kindness can make you feel good about yourself in many ways and others are more encouraged to pay it back by also performing good deeds.

It just feels good to be nice to someone. As you're feeling nice for doing your good deed(s), it can also affect your health and well-being. Researchers have linked good deeds to experiencing more happiness and a drop in stress level.

When you do good deeds for others with no expectation of anything in return, you're opening up a path to success. It may not be monetary success, but the good feelings you'll get for the act can spur you on to success.

Ways you can do a good deed for others include paying for the person who is behind you in a drive-through. Doing something nice for a co-worker that's having a hard time by bringing some flowers or taking

him/her out to lunch can make it a better day for both you and the co-worker.

What happens inside the body when you're doing a good deed is that your anxiety and stress level decreases dramatically. When you do good deeds on a regular basis, you become a happier person – more optimistic and more positive.

Physically, acts of kindness promote an emotional process in your body which includes releasing the hormone, oxytocin – which in turn releases nitric oxide, a chemical that dilates blood vessels.

When blood vessels dilate, they lower blood pressure and protect the heart. And, researchers have found that when we give our time and attention to others, we become more satisfied with our lives, aren't as apt to become depressed – and it even has an effect on delaying mortality.

As a relaxation technique, doing good deeds is a habit that can put you in a happier mood and can also be a good example for others. Children, especially, benefit from observing the adults in their lives performing good deeds.

Satisfaction in relationships is another good reason for performing acts of kindness. You're not as apt to isolate yourself and are more able to talk to others in social settings.

Studies have shown that those who perform good deeds out of the norm for others at least once per week become happier over time. Throughout most of our lives, we've been told to be nice.

We've also been told to treat others as we would want to be treated. It turns out that the old advice is more than just attempting to turn humans into good people. You don't always perform a good deed thinking it's good for your health, but now we know it helps.

In the busy world we live in, it's sometimes difficult to think of doing things for others that don't give us something back in return. But when you make a conscious effort to make good deeds a habit rather than a simple,

random act of kindness once in a while, you'll benefit in ways you'd never think about.

Doing good deeds for others is motivating and inspiring. Your chances of realizing success are increased tenfold. So, why not try doing something for someone else, without expecting anything in return and see how good it feels?



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