

10 Easy Ways to De-Stress Your Life



By Melissa Roske
Certified Personal & Life Coach for Women
www.WheelsInMotionCoaching.com

Strung tighter than a Strativarius? Give stress the ol' heave-ho, with these 10 tension-busting tips...

Picture this: You've just gotten home from work – late, as usual -- and you are exhausted. The train was packed, so you had to stand -- in brand new, toe-pinching pumps. You've got dinner to prepare, kids to bathe, homework to correct (if it's actually been done), and then – if you haven't collapsed from stress and exhaustion – you need to put the kids to bed. Oh, and the dog has diarrhea, your mother-in-law has left 10 messages on your answering machine, and the dishwasher flooded. Naturally your spouse is at work, where you feel *you* should be -- you have a huge deadline looming. Your stress level is through the roof.

Does this scenario sound familiar? If it does, welcome to the club. The Overwhelmed, Overworked, Stressed-Out, Had-it-to-*here* Women's Club. The question is, is this a club you really want to be a member of? Chances are, the answer is a resounding “No!”

Luckily, help is on the way. Here, 10 easy ways to de-stress your life and save your sanity, starting now...

1. Try wishful thinking. If stress has gotten the better of you and a quick Caribbean getaway is a mere pipedream, try going on a “mental vacation” instead. Here's how: Close your eyes and picture a peaceful, awe-inspiring place (i.e., a beach in far-away Fiji). Hear the waves gently lap against the shoreline. Feel the soft, island breeze on your face, the pristine-white sand beneath your toes. Taste the salty ocean brine on your tongue as you surface from a refreshing dip in the azure island waters. Smell the coconut oil the muscle-bound cabana boy is rubbing on your back (a girl can dream, can't she?). See how relaxed you suddenly feel?

If you can take yourself away from your day-to-day worries and pressures, even if it's just for a few precious minutes in your own mind, you will regain enough composure to forge on in a calmer, more relaxed way. Give it a try.

2. Get organized. If remembering birthdays feels like a Herculean task and your most overused expression is, “Have you seen my keys?”, you're not alone. When your life is hectic and you're juggling many responsibilities at once, it's easy to drop the ball. But one thing's for sure: Having a well functioning organizational system in place does more than relieve stress: It can save your sanity. David Allen, personal productivity guru and author of *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity*, suggests using “collection tools,” such as in-baskets, paper-based and electronic note-taking devices, and email, to capture self-generated input as well as information coming from outside. In

other words, make sure that everything you need is collected somewhere *other* than in your head.

If you need a virtual string around your finger, check out the following reminder services:

- 1.) Findgift.com. This site will send you free email reminders about birthdays, anniversaries, or other important events. The site's "Gift Wizard" makes gift suggestions based on the recipient's gender, age, hobbies, etc.
- 2.) Memotome.com. This free email service allows you to schedule up to 10 reminders per task or event at any time interval (days, hours, minutes). You'll never forget milk again!
- 3.) Whatbills.com. This free service simplifies your life by allowing you to sign up for free email reminders on up to three bills; or you can pay \$1.95 a month for reminders on an unlimited number of bills.
- 4.) Rxnotify.com. For 10 cents per text message and 25 cents per voice mail, you can get yearly to hourly reminders to renew your prescriptions.

3. Connect with your inner slacker. When stress overloads your system, the body releases adrenaline, causing your heart to beat faster, the pupils to dilate, blood vessels to constrict, and muscles to contract -- all physiological responses preparing you for "fight or flight." The best way to counteract this stressed-out state is to give yourself permission to relax. Practicing yoga and engaging in silent meditation are relaxing for some; others prefer soaking in a hot tub, going for a run, or reading a trashy novel. Deep-breathing exercises or relaxation CDs can be helpful too. Whatever floats your boat, go for it.

4. Put yourself in "time-out." Chances are, the concept of giving your kids a "time-out" is not new to you. You've probably been there and done that. What you may not have considered, however, is giving *yourself* a time-out. Or, put another way, permission to remove yourself from a negative or potentially explosive situation. It's actually quite simple. When you feel as if you're about to pop your top -- your kids are fighting over the remote, say -- instead of screaming for quiet, calmly announce that you'll be in your bedroom for the next few minutes for a "time-out." Watch your family's collective jaws drop to the floor. Then, in the sanctuary of your bedroom (or wherever you can find some peace and quiet), take a few deep breaths and feel the tension drain from your body. Once your frazzled nerves have been sufficiently soothed, return with a smile on your face.

5. Bid “Good riddance!” to guilt. Most of us spend way too much time worrying about the stuff we didn’t do, couldn’t do, or “should” have done better. Not only is this sort of thinking a major waste of time, it makes us feel worse! The solution? Allow yourself to accept the fact that things are less than perfect – that *life* is less than perfect -- and move on. Yes, the bed is unmade, but you closed a major deal at work and were amply rewarded for it. Yes, there are dirty dishes in the sink, but you remembered to send your best friend a get-well card and it made her day. Pat yourself on the back for the things you’ve done well, and see what happens.

6. Savor each moment. You’re in for a cozy night *chez toi*. You’ve got a tub of buttered popcorn in one hand, the remote in the other. Just as you’re ready to settle in for some *Sex in the City* reruns you Tivoed, your mind drifts toward thoughts of... defrosting the fridge. Taking Fido to the vet. Scheduling a root canal. What’s going on here?

Instead of allowing your mind to stray, bring your attention back to the here and now. There’s nothing “wrong” or self-indulgent with enjoying yourself, so bask in the positive sensations and emotions of the moment. You deserve it! One way to bring fun and enjoyment into your life is to make a “Me time” list that includes all the things you enjoy – scrapbooking; baking; inline skating; hiking; playing Scrabble; a relaxing pedicure. Then actively start bringing those activities into your everyday life. Once fun becomes an integral part of your routine, you’ll start to notice a serious reduction in your stress level.

7. Get physical. Research has shown that daily stress can trigger headaches, make muscles tense, and even raise your blood pressure. Stress also suppresses the immune system, making you more vulnerable to illness. One way to bring stress down a notch is to exercise. Before you balk at the idea of having to spend hours at the gym pumping iron amid Lycra-clad co-eds, it might help to know that even a 10-minute walk can decrease stress. Another bonus: When you exercise, beta-endorphins -- the body’s natural “feel good” relaxants that counteract stress hormones -- are released. A final reason to slip into your sneakers? Besides being a break in your routine, exercise gets blood circulating, elevates your mood, and eases tension. Studies also show that active people have a decreased risk of heart disease, the number-one cause of death in the United States.

8. Phone a friend. Many experts cite friendship as the key to surviving hard times and navigating stressful situations. In fact, a good *kvetchfest* with a pal might be all you need to feel calmer and more centered. If you’re going through an especially rocky period in your life, for instance, it can be tempting hole up at home in your bathrobe and bunny slippers, with nothing more than a pint of Chunky Monkey for company. Resist the temptation to isolate yourself. A good friend will be there for continual reassurance and emotional support. An added bonus? Reaching out will make your pal feel needed and appreciated too.

9. Kick the (caffeine) habit. Sipping a Starbucks *venti* latte each morning, followed by a Diet Coke at lunch and a mid-afternoon Red Bull does a lot more than keep you alert: It stresses you out. The caffeine in your favorite liquid pick-me-ups actually raises your blood pressure and increases adrenaline, a stress hormone. In fact, caffeine mimics and even exaggerates the body's response to stress. So, maybe it's time to "Just Say No" to caffeine. If the thought of quitting cold turkey seems as appealing as sitting through the uncut version of your sister-in-law's baby-shower video, try tapering off. You can also try substituting decaf or herbal tea for one cup of your favorite caffeinated beverage, or mixing regular with decaf beans at the supermarket. If you take it slowly, the road to caffeine-free living will be (virtually) painless.

10. Cut up your credit cards. Being in debt – or simply overspending – can have a serious impact on your emotional health and general well-being. So can the constant stress of worrying about the state of your finances. If you're in debt and have too much credit available to you, for instance, financial advisor Suze Orman, author of *The 9 Steps to Financial Freedom*, recommends avoiding the temptation to spend what you don't have by lowering the amount of credit available to you. Here's how: call your credit-card company and ask them to lower your credit level. Pick the amount of credit you would like to have in case of emergency (\$500 or \$1000), and ask them to set it there. Or choose a credit card that must be paid in full each month, such as American Express, to lower your risk of falling into debt or to keep further debt from mounting. Having easily available credit is awfully tempting. Cutting yourself off is key.

***If you want to get your life in gear
and on the road to success,
Wheels in Motion can help, starting today...***

Now that you have 10 winning strategies to send stress packing, **how do you plan on keeping stress from zapping your energy and throwing your life/work balance out of whack**, in the days, months - and possibly years - to come?

One way is by partnering with a caring, empathetic coach. A coach who wants to help you achieve the success you deserve. **A coach who understands your needs – and your life.**

That's where I come in.

My name is Melissa Roske, and I am a New York University-certified life and personal coach, helping women to uncover their hopes and dreams, to realize their potential and to successfully attain their goals.

Let me help you too.

“Test Drive” Coaching...for FREE.

Is coaching right for you? Try a free, 30-minute “Test Drive” coaching session and experience the power and benefits of coaching. There is absolutely no obligation.

Contact me:

- By email: Melissa@WheelsInMotionCoaching.com
- By phone: (646) 736-8502
- My website: <http://www.wheelsinmotioncoaching.com>
- Mail?
Wheels of Motion Coaching
500 Fifth Avenue
Suite 4810, New York, NY 10110

All Best,

Melissa Roske

Melissa Roske
Certified Personal & Life Coach for Women
Wheels in Motion Coaching
www.wheelsinmotioncoaching.com