

How to calm yourself down

We can get so used to feeling stressed that it can feel weird to wind down and relax. As soon as we start to chill out we get jumpy and feel worse. If this sounds familiar, it's a sure sign you do need to stress less but know it is going to take a bit of time and few practice runs before you'll notice any changes.

Don't think about the end result, focus on the steps you have to take today to get to that outcome

Lots of anxiety is thinking about how future events will turn out. Will I pass this test? Will they like me? Do I have enough friends? Try to tame your mind so that you stop thinking about questions you can't know the answer to. Instead practice narrowing your attention to what you can do right now.

Exercise

Being physically active lowers our stress levels. Exercise increases blood flow to the smart parts of our brains where problems can get solved. When we sit or lie still for too long the more primitive parts of our brain kicks in and our thoughts go around and around.

Movements where you move rhythmically are especially good for reducing stress. Dancing, surfing, drumming, roller-skating, table tennis, swimming, juggling, down ball, volleyball, boxing and gymnastics are all rhythmic movements.

Write it out

Get your worries out of your head. Write them down on a sheet of paper. Map them out using Inspiration or Kidspiration. Make a note or a voice memo on your phone.

Know that everyone has worries.

All human beings worry at times so don't feel strange or odd or different. Just learn that you can find yourself worrying at times, just like everyone else.

Talk to someone you trust

Now you know everyone gets stressed at times, tell someone you can rely on about feeling worried. Even if they don't have any suggestions for you, just telling someone makes a difference.

Breath deeply

When you feel stressed, take a moment to breathe deeply. Put your hand on your belly and take a big breath. Then slowly breathe out as you count to yourself, "one thousand, two thousand, three thousand". Slowing down your breathing resets your body.

Drink water

Drinking water lowers the level of cortisol (a stress hormone) in your body.

Stop mind juggling start doing

Lots of people when they get stressed freeze up and feel like they can't start anything. Start somewhere. Your first attempt doesn't have to be the perfect answer. Getting started builds momentum and confidence.

Use a mood shift playlist

Music is a powerful way of lessening stress. Make a playlist of your best feel good songs and play when you find the worries are creeping in.