- Stress management

9 EASY TRICKS to Lower the Pressure

Cross something simple off your to-do list

Pick one thing you've been putting off—making that annual checkup appointment, sending that birthday gift to a friend—and



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just do it. Chores like this take up space in our brains, causing underlying stress. Taking even one of them off your mental list will give you a sense of accomplishment and a few moments of "*Ahhh...*"

Stretch out

Stretching relaxes and loosens your body, of course, but there's also evidence that it can ease your mind. One study showed that 10 minutes of stretching slowly and mindfully could reduce anxiety. So do some downward-facing dog poses, breathe in and out deeply, and let the de-stressing begin.

Use the 3-3-3 rule

Many therapists and psychologists recommend using this grounding technique to help alleviate anxiety in the moment: Look around and name three things you can see, then identify three things you can feel, and finally, move three parts of your body. This redirects your attention from spiraling anxious thoughts to very specific tasks that center your thinking and calm you down.

Take a walk outside

A brisk 10-minute stroll can lower anxiety, research shows. Any sort of exercise is thought to boost mood-regulating brain chemicals like serotonin, which helps induce calmness. And just being outside in fresh air has a relaxing effect on the mind.

Have a laugh

Cackling at something hilarious can be downright therapeutic: Studies indicate that laughing at a funny YouTube video has a significant effect on perceived stress. Laughter has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression by suppressing hormones like cortisol. Also, it stimulates circulation and helps muscles relax, which may reduce physical symptoms of anxiety.

Cancel something

This one takes mere seconds! Look at your calendar and find one thing you really can skip, such as a social event you're not psyched about or a Zoom meeting that doesn't require your input. Politely bow out and replace it with... nothing! Your body and mind can rest and recharge.

Play your favorite song

Numerous studies have demonstrated that listening to music helps reduce stress and that listening to music with the intention of relaxing helps lower cortisol levels;

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choosing an energizing tune can make you feel more alert and focused.

Give your face a cold plunge

Splashing ice-cold water on your face for 15 to 20 seconds won't just wake you up—there's evidence that it also engages your body's relaxation system to counteract your stress response. An option that is more makeup-friendly: Hold an ice cube or a chilly drink against your skin. The sensory experience can quickly distract you from worrying thoughts.

Do some heavy petting

Playing with dogs and cats is good for both improving your mood and offering stress relief. Research also suggests that social interaction between people and their dogs increases levels of the feel-good hormone oxytocin. Any animal can be an emotional support animal.



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