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# 10 Fun Ways To Reduce Stress Levels

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## **1. Meditate.**

Harvard physician Herbert Benson extensively studied a form of Transcendental Meditation proven to activate the relaxation response and improve dozens of health conditions ranging from heart disease to diabetes to obesity to cancer. All forms of meditation activate the relaxation response, but if you find it hard to sit in silence, try downloading the free Self-Healing Kit I created, which comes equipped with a self-healing guided meditation known to activate the relaxation response at [MindOverMedicineBook.com](http://MindOverMedicineBook.com).

## **2. Laugh more!**

In his bestselling book *The Anatomy Of An Illness*, Norman Cousins tells the story of how he cured himself from the debilitating condition ankylosing spondylitis by laughing along with Marx Brothers movies. He wrote, “I made the joyous discovery that ten minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anesthetic effect and would give me at least two hours of pain-free sleep. When the pain-killing effect of the laughter wore off, we would switch on the motion picture projector again and not infrequently, it would lead to another pain-free interval.” *u*

## **3. Play with animals.**

Snuggling with our pets fills us with oxytocin, endorphins, and other healing hormones that support the body’s self-healing mechanisms. This is why pet therapy can be so effective, both mentally and physically. So go cuddle Fido, rub Fifi’s belly, and let them cut your cortisol levels while ramping up your body’s capacity to self-repair.

## **4. Give generously.**

When Cami Walker was diagnosed with debilitating multiple sclerosis, conventional medicine had very little to offer. Then a South African medicine woman suggested that, instead of focusing on herself, she needed to shift towards thinking more about others. The medicine woman wrote Cami a prescription – Give 29 gifts in 29 days. So she did. And as if by magic, her MS symptoms started to diminish. How? Because giving activates relaxation responses, which bolster the body’s natural self-repair mechanisms.

## **5. Express yourself creatively.**

Creative expression releases endorphins and other feel-good neurotransmitters, reduces depression and anxiety,

improves your immune function, relieves physical pain ,and activates the parasympathetic nervous system, thereby lowering your heart rate, decreasing your blood pressure, slowing down your breathing, and lowering cortisol.

## **6. Practice yoga, tai chi, Qigong, or dance forms like Gabrielle Roth's 5 Rhythms – or get a massage.**

All of these modalities, which combine the benefits of exercise and meditation, steep you in healing hormones and have been proven to effectively drop cortisol levels and improve your body's ability to heal itself. Or get a massage, the ultimate relaxation response activator. A nurturing massage not only relaxes your muscles, it relaxes your nervous system and kicks those self-healing mechanisms into high gear.

## **7. Get it on.**

Those with healthy sex lives live longer, have a lower risk of heart disease and stroke, get less breast cancer, enjoy the benefits of stronger immune systems, sleep better, appear more youthful, enjoy improved fitness, have enhanced fertility, get relief from chronic pain, experience fewer migraines, suffer from less depression, and enjoy an improved quality of life. Oh – and their cortisol levels are lower!

## **8. Pray or attend services as part of a spiritual community.**

Those who attend religious services live up to 14 years longer than those who don't, but don't go to church if it's not in alignment with your authentic beliefs. Find – or create – your own spiritual tribe, and enjoy the hormonal benefits of gathering together with the intention of loving, healing, and lifting the vibration of each other and the planet. Your nervous system – and your body – will thank you.

## **9. Alleviate your loneliness.**

Lonely people have twice the rate of heart disease as people who aren't lonely. In fact, loneliness researchers suggest that alleviating your loneliness is more important to a healthy lifestyle than quitting smoking or starting to exercise. (Read more in How To Stay Healthy Even If You Eat Junk, Smoke Ciggies, Skip Exercise & Booze It Up. As Robert Putnam put it in *Bowling Alone*, “As a rough rule of thumb, if you belong to no groups but decide to join one, you cut your risk of dying over the next year in half. If you smoke and belong to no groups, it's a toss-up statistically whether you should stop smoking or start joining. These findings are in some way heartening. It's easier to join a group than to lose weight, exercise regularly, or quit smoking.”<sup>11</sup>

## **10. Be brave enough to take radical action in order to reduce your stress responses.**

Ask yourself, “What does my body need in order to heal?” If your intuition says, “You have to quit that soul-sucking job” or “You've got to get out of that abusive relationship,” listen up. You've just written The Prescription for yourself. (To learn more about how to write The Prescription for yourself, read Mind Over Medicine.)

- See more at: <http://www.stressstostrength.com/what-stress-does-to-your-body-and-how-to-reduce-your-cortisol-levels/#sthash.0faQZTVh.dpuf>