Stress Less



Being stressed out stinks! Unfortunately, you can feel stressed out over many things: moving, starting a new school, fighting with a friend, listening to the news, even being out in bad weather! Help is here. Find out about some of the ways you can relax. (One of them is to laugh!)



1. Create a Personal Stress Kit

Let your personal "stress less" kit rescue you from stressful events! Make an attractive container. Carefully stock it with things that will help you relax, laugh, dream, or put you at ease. Be sure there are at least six items in your kit. You might include books, cartoons, photographs, music, a card or letter from a friend or relative, or a picture from a magazine of a place that looks peaceful. Think about how each item helps you relieve stress. Remember to pull out your kit when you need to de-stress.

2. Stress Less Writing

One way to let go of feelings that are stressful is to write in a journal or notebook about what's on your mind. Start a "stress less" journal for those times when you need to release some tension.

3. What Are You Feeling?

Learning how to identify and describe your different moods and feelings is an important part of dealing with stress. Keep a feelings diary for a day. How many different moods did you experience?

4. Do for Others

One of the best ways to lessen your stress is to focus on someone else. For one afternoon or evening help someone with a project or problem.

5. Move That Stress Away

Physical motion can release the tension in your body. (Make sure your motions aren't harmful to you or anyone or anything else.) Make a list of ten actions you can take to reduce stress. Some examples are running up and down the stairs a few times, dancing around to your favorite song, or jumping rope. Look at your list when tension starts to rise. Do one of your motions!

6. Listen to Music

Listen to five of your favorite songs. Decide which one is most relaxing to you and why. Play your song for two other people and see if they think it is relaxing. Find out what music they would choose to relax.

7. Pass It On

Ask three of your friends or classmates how they deal with stress. Collect the five best techniques. Remember to try one of them yourself the next time you're feeling stressed.

8. Read and Relax

Read a book. Following a character's adventures can help you forget about your stress. With other girls, come up with a list of especially relaxing books.

9. One at a Time

Are you stressed because you are trying to do too much in too little time? Maybe you need to practice some time management. Read about time management in the "Be Healthy, Be Fit" chapter of your *Junior Girl Scout Handbook.*

10. Practice Elevator Breathing

Deep, focused breathing can refresh your mind. Imagine that breathing in and exhaling out is like an elevator moving up and down the floors of a building. Practice these exercises.

- Inhale slowly through your nose. Feel your breath travel all the way to the basement (the bottom of your spine).
- Exhale slowly through your mouth.
- Put your hands on your belly and inhale, taking your breath up one floor to your navel. Exhale.
- Put your hands on your ribs and inhale, taking your breath up a second floor, to your chest. Exhale
- Put your hands on your face and inhale up to the attic— your throat, cheeks, and forehead. Feel your head fill with breath. Exhale and feel all your tension and worries leave your body and go out the elevator door.