



STRESS LESS: TIPS FOR YOU

from Nicola Morgan
author of *Blame My Brain*
Know Your Brain
and *The Teenage Guide to Stress*

Stress is not always bad; it helps us perform at our best, for example in exams, competitions, or interviews. Some people enjoy stress – we feel we’re achieving and relaxing times feel even better. But stress can be a problem in two ways: when it becomes panic, or when it goes on too long without a break. So, we need to learn to switch off, to give brain and body breaks and prevent illness. Our bodies are not designed for constant stress. Tackle it before it gets too bad.

These tips work for people of all ages:

1. Learn to breathe properly and notice when you aren't. A one-minute breathing exercise can make a huge difference to your brain and body. (See my free relaxation audio.)
2. Identify simple, positive things that make you feel better and do at least one every day for about half an hour. It could be a bath, a walk, a film, a magazine - whatever makes you happy.
3. Reward yourself, little and often. A five minute You-Tube break after each half hour of hard work, for example.
4. Don't let yourself get too hungry. Your brain can't work at its best without fuel.
5. Exercise. A fast walk is perfect. (Don't exercise too much or you'll have no energy for work.)
6. Get outside; find a natural view. Our brains react well to big spaces and greenery.
7. "Readaxation". Getting immersed in an enjoyable book is a great way to relax. Fiction works well because it takes you out of your own worries but non-fiction is great, too – as long as you're reading what you *want* to read.
8. Remember that almost all bad things change and pass and soon you will feel differently about whatever worries you now.
9. Talk to someone before your worries get too much.
10. Whatever you're worried about, you are not alone. Finding people (perhaps via a good website) who have the same worries can be incredibly reassuring. Check websites with a trusted adult.
11. Find a relaxation method that works for you – relaxation audios, meditation, yoga, whatever. Practise – relaxation is not easy at first.
12. List the things in your life you could change and start to tackle one of them.
13. Have a laugh. Laughter is incredibly invigorating and de-stressing, releasing endorphins around our brains. So, whether it's watching an episode of your favourite comedy show or laughing at a You-Tube clip of goats yelling like humans, do it whenever you need to!

More help in *The Teenage Guide to Stress* and on my website: www.nicolamorgan.com

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