Lower Your Stress-Level with Exercise

LiveLifeWell

While we can't always avoid things in life that cause us stress, we can find healthy ways to relieve stress. Exercising allows you to take control and helps ease anxiety. Not to mention it's good for your body, too! Read on for exercise tips to help lower the stress-level in your life.

Simple Exercise Ideas for Stress Relief

- **Start slowly.** Any physical activity or exercise can feel overwhelming when you haven't done it for a while. Make the decision to get moving – regardless of what the activity is – for at least 15 minutes each day. You may find you have more energy than you thought and be motivated to keep going!
- **Keep it simple.** Choose activities that require little preparation like walking, yard work or cleaning the house. Rhythmic activities like raking leaves or cleaning can be healing. As your body gets into a rhythm, let your mind go to work through problems, find solutions or just daydream for a while.
- **Every step counts.** When you're busy and under stress, going to the gym or fitting additional activities into your day might be too much to handle. Walking is a great way to simplify your workouts and reduce stress. Start keeping track of your steps. You may be surprised to learn how many steps you already take each day!
- **Make the time.** We all have busy lives and if you don't make time for exercise, you will always come up with an excuse why you can't do it. Make a mental "to do" list each morning. If it doesn't include any physical activity, see if you can find a way to include exercise within an activity you're already doing. For example, while watching TV, try doing jumping jacks, squats, sit-ups or push-ups during commercial breaks instead of sitting still.

Take the First Step with Abbott's Walking Program!

Sign up for the 10K-A-Day – a motivational walking program designed to help you reach the goal of taking 10,000 steps each day. Receive a free step counter from Abbott and track your steps online. To learn more or sign up, visit https://abbott.10kaday.com.

Higher-Intensity Workouts for Stress Relief

If you're already active or feel like you need a harder workout to lower your stress level, try these high-intensity activities:

- **Interval Training:** Intense cardio is a super stress-reliever because your body releases endorphins – feel-good hormones that boost your energy and mood. These workouts are effective and efficient because you exercise at a higher intensity level for a shorter period of time.
- **Circuit Training:** We all know it can be hard to fit exercise into each day. Save time by combining exercises and moving quickly! Practicing a variety of exercises keeps it interesting, and you won't need to find as much time to fit a workout into your day.
- **Strength Training:** When you lift weights, you not only strengthen your muscles, you build confidence and self-worth. The combination of mental and physical strength makes tasks easier to accomplish – and that is a powerful stress-reliever!
- **Boxing or Kickboxing:** Sometimes we need to blow off some steam and literally take out the stress we may feel after a long day. Use a punching bag, other soft surface or even the air around you to literally kick or punch out your stress. Taking out aggression in a healthy way can help you feel strong, powerful and in control.