

5 Surprising Stress-Relief Tips That Really Work

Don't have the time for deep breathing and exercise? Try these fun ways to lower your blood pressure and ease your mind.

By Ellen Breslau



Stress Relief Now!

If you often feel stressed out (your health and your job are primary culprits!), you're not the only one. A recent American Psychological Association [Stress in America](http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2012/generations.aspx?item=1) (<http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2012/generations.aspx?item=1>) study found that Boomers (people aged 48 to 66) and Matures (people aged 67 and older) say that their stress levels are higher than they consider healthy. And while Millennials (those aged 18 to 33) experience the most stress overall, 33 percent of Boomers and 29 percent of Matures say their stress has increased in the last year.

What can you do to ease your mind and body? Deep breathing, meditation, and exercise are always helpful, but sometimes you just don't have the time or energy. That's why we've found these fun tricks, all backed by the latest research, to get you feeling calm and centered and stress-free.



1. Laugh

A big belly laugh can have all kinds of positive effects on your body. According to the [Mayo Clinic](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-relief/SR00034) (<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-relief/SR00034>), "A rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response and increases your heart rate and blood pressure." In other words, it releases tension and ups blood flow to the heart and other vital organs. What else can it do? Lower blood pressure, and may even positively influence blood sugar levels. Need a place to get started? Check out our [Funny](#)

[Poems for Grandparent](http://www.grandparents.com/grandkids/activities-games-and-crafts/funny-poems-for-grandparents)
 [\(http://www.grandparents.com/grandkids/activities-games-and-crafts/funny-poems-for-grandparents\)](http://www.grandparents.com/grandkids/activities-games-and-crafts/funny-poems-for-grandparents)s or our [jokes for you and your family.](http://www.grandparents.com/grandkids/activities-games-and-crafts/sneak-preview-jokes-for-kids)
 [\(http://www.grandparents.com/grandkids/activities-games-and-crafts/sneak-preview-jokes-for-kids\)](http://www.grandparents.com/grandkids/activities-games-and-crafts/sneak-preview-jokes-for-kids)



2. Eat an Orange

Common wisdom has always said that vitamin C boosts the immune system and wards off cold viruses, but it turns out Vitamin C can reduce stress, too. Researchers have found that a boost of vitamin C taken when you're feeling stressed can [lower blood pressure](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22695870) [\(http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22695870\)](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22695870) and calm the body. So the next time you feel anxiety come on, reach for that orange, or grab some C-rich blueberries or strawberries.



3. Go Outside

Turns out what you choose to surround yourself with makes a huge difference in your stress level. A recent [study from the University of Edinburgh](http://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/more-green-space-is-linked-to-less-stress-in-deprived-communities-evidence-from-salivary-cortisol-patterns(2de21240-4884-4991-a252-ada502e119de).html) [\(http://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/more-green-space-is-linked-to-less-stress-in-deprived-communities-evidence-from-salivary-cortisol-patterns\(2de21240-4884-4991-a252-ada502e119de\).html\)](http://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/more-green-space-is-linked-to-less-stress-in-deprived-communities-evidence-from-salivary-cortisol-patterns(2de21240-4884-4991-a252-ada502e119de).html) found that people who surround themselves with more green space—tree-lined streets, a walk in the park—are significantly less stressed than their urban counterparts. And it doesn't mean you have to spend hours outdoors. A 2010 study in the journal *Environmental Science & Technology* found that just five minutes outside in the fresh air doing a mild activity like walking

can boost your mood.

Need more reasons to get outside? [Researchers at the University of Michigan \(http://ns.umich.edu/new/releases/6892\)](http://ns.umich.edu/new/releases/6892) found that your memory and attention span can improve by 20 percent after an hour in nature. So take a walk outside, sit in the park, and enjoy.



4. Rub On Rose Oil

A recent study from Srinakharinwirot University in Thailand found that people who absorbed rose oil through their skin (as an experiment control, they wore masks so they couldn't smell the scent), had lower breathing rates and blood pressure, and they felt more relaxed than those in a control group. [Click here to learn how to make your own rose oil. \(http://www.hqtvgardens.com/beauty/coming-up-roses-diy-rose-oil-and-rose-water\)](http://www.hqtvgardens.com/beauty/coming-up-roses-diy-rose-oil-and-rose-water)

Rose oil not your favorite scent? Try another natural de-stressor, [ylang-ylang oil \(http://amzn.to/18eRUVx\)](http://amzn.to/18eRUVx).



5. Walk Into Another Room

It might sound a little nutty, but according to a study at the [University of Notre Dame \(http://www3.nd.edu/~memory/Reprints/Radvansky%20&%20Copeland%202000\)](http://www3.nd.edu/~memory/Reprints/Radvansky%20&%20Copeland%20200), just shifting your environment a little can change what you're thinking about and help you forget stress. According to the study, when you walk into a new room, your brain views it as a new event, and essentially resets itself, forgetting what was happening before. This works great for getting rid of those tension-filled thoughts. It also explains why you can never remember where you

left your keys!!

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