



Essentials **to** Beating Stress

TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO RELAX, RELEASE AND LET GO



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Essentials to Beating Stress:

Tools You Can Use to Relax, Release, and Let Go

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my parents for their support, encouragement, love, and guidance. They were my first fans. To my father, who is deceased, I know you are watching over me. Thanks.

Thanks also to

- My sister, for constantly pushing me forward and for your words of wisdom.
- To my coaches, colleagues, and friends who believe in me.
- Kathy, my editor, for all your questions and suggestions.
- To my clients who helped pulled ideas out of my soul to write this book for you.

To My Readers

I want to thank you for downloading *Essentials to Beating Stress*. You have taken a step forward towards living a healthier life.

Even though technology has saved us time, it has also created stress when things do not go the way we plan. Yes, machines do break down—crash—because of overloading.

Doesn't that sound familiar? We too break down from stress. Trying to do so many things perfectly can wear us down. Multitasking is not the blue ribbon. Multitasking can wear us out and drain our energy.

I wrote this short book to jump-start your Stress Reduction Program, so you can live a happy life. In the following pages are a few examples of how to beat your own stress. [You can read more in my book *Stress Down and Lift UP*, a 30-day lifestyle program tailored to your needs.]

So, sit back and Relax, Release, and Let Go.

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The meaning of Stress:

Stress\stres\ n. a: constraining force or influence; b: a force that tends to destroy the body; c: factor that induces bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation; also 1: a state of tension resulting from stress; 2: emphasis, weight; 3: intensity of utterance given to a speech sound, syllable, or word; 4: relative force or prominence of sound in verse.

(Webster's New Ideal Dictionary Presented by Time, G. & C. Merriam Co., 1978)

What is Stress?

Stress is an internal or external force that can cause internal problems. Our brain reacts by seeing stress as a threat. The brain sends signals to the adrenal glands to secrete hormones—adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones speed up our body's function. Our heart rate increases, our bodies sweat, and blood pressure rises.

Stress can be harmful if not taken care of properly.

These are among the risks:

- ulcers and digestive disorders
- migraine headaches
- high blood pressure
- rashes or hives
- fatigue
- heart attack
- increased use of alcohol
- increased use of drugs
- asthma
- anxiety and mood swings
- depression and suicide
- sadness
- overeating or lack of eating

- allergies
- increased colds and infections
- compromised immune system

Identify the Stressors in Your Life

Have you recently experienced any of the following?

- death of a spouse or other loved one
- divorce
- marital separation
- personal injury or illness
- being fired from work
- family member diagnosed with an illness
- pregnancy
- postpartum blues
- sexual difficulties
- loss of income
- loss of business
- relocation
- loss of your home due to natural disaster
- children returning home
- parents moving in
- foreclosure on your home
- change in workload

- placing a parent in a nursing home
- change in schools
- menopause
- holidays
- repossession of a car
- first year at college
- tax audit
- falling-out with a friend
- change in eating habits

Dollars and Stress

The economy plays a role in causing stress. Many people worry about not having enough money to pay their regular bills, medical bills, college costs, or their rent or mortgage.

You cannot avoid money problems if you do not have a budget and live within your means. Look for a financial planner or an accountant who can help you with your finances.

Tips:

- Always save money from every paycheck.
- Know the basics—rent, light, fuel, gas, etc.—and plan for those bills.
- Make hard choices. Do you really need cable?
- Don't avoid paying your bills. Go to a debt consolidation office, where they can help you before it is too late.

And the most important thing you can do? Limit your spending and stay within your means.

Stop keeping up with the Joneses. The Joneses can send you to the poorhouse.

For the entrepreneur: stop chasing money. Work your business based on relationships and watch it grow.

Other Stressful Things

Sitting in traffic can be very stressful, but try listening to soft music or jazz. Write out your grocery shopping list. Have a snack. (Do these things while standing still, not while moving.)

What about waiting in long lines? Take a good book and read it. Get caught up on your e-mails and other social media accounts. Play music, but listen quietly with your earphones so you will not distress the person standing next to you.

External Stressors

Difficult neighbors

Arguing with spouse

Waiting in long lines

Internal Stressors

loss of control

trying to please people

Physical Stressors

illnesses

chronic pain

sleep deprivation

Work Stressors

Conflict with co-workers

Commuting

Lack of support from your boss

Deadlines to meet

Long hours

Low pay

Social Stressors

Fear of crime

Poverty

Victim of a crime

Stress Busters

You cannot live without some stress. It can be good or bad for you. It all depends upon how you react to the stressors in your life.

There are so many ways to reduce stress; however, they cannot help you if you do not incorporate stress busters in your daily life.

Make at least some of these ideas a habit:

- Take care of yourself.
- Exercise. (See more on this major stress buster below.)
- Spend time with positive people.
- Remember your achievements and triumphs, not your failures.
- Love yourself.
- Count to ten before getting angry.
- Do not focus on what you do *not* have, but focus on what you *do* have.
- Help other people. By focusing on others, you will take your mind off yourself.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Live in the present.
- Be realistic. No one is perfect; everyone makes mistakes. Repeating them is what makes them stressful, but—remember—people become successful from mistakes.
- Simplify your plate; do not take on too many projects.
- Sleep in.

When you become stressed, use any of these methods to counter the effects.

Exercise is a major stress buster because it build ups endorphins in our bodies. These hormones act as natural tranquilizers to help calm our nerves. It reduces tension and anxiety and clears the mind. Exercise also boosts your immune system, which helps fight off free radicals that damage your cells.

Laughter

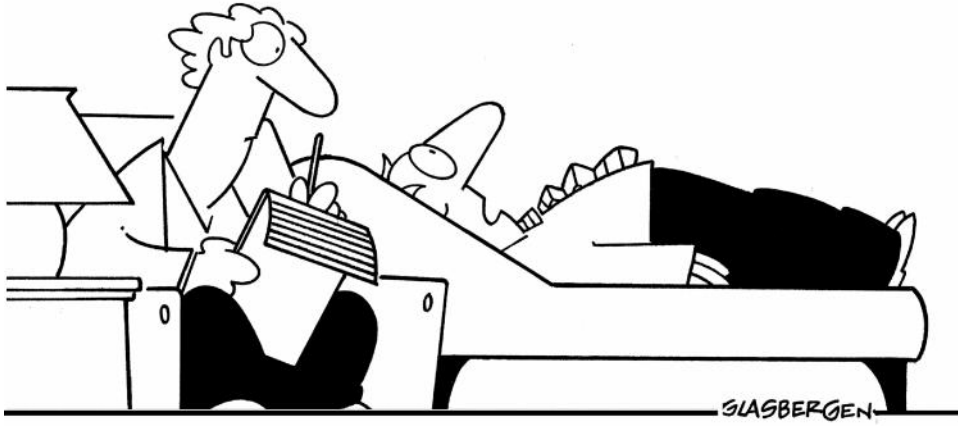
Laughter is the best medicine when dealing with stress. Watch old movies or comic shows on television. Call your best friend and share a good story with each other. Do you know, there are laughing aerobic classes you can take? Yes, classes that make you laugh! And I heard that people in these classes feel good about themselves and become more productive.

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“You’ve been working awfully hard lately. If you need a little fresh air and sunshine, go to www.fresh-air-and-sunshine.com!”

Cartoon by Randy Glasbergen (used by permission)(cannot print without Randy’s permission)



"Ever since I signed up for Twitter, I get the feeling that people are following me!"

Cartoon by Randy Glasbergen (used by permission)(cannot print without Randy's permission)

The Quiet Corner (And, NO, Not the Corner You Sit in Because You Were BAD)

At home, think of designing a meditation room or corner. You can arrange real or silk plants and add an aromatherapy diffuser to relax you.

Try rubbing your feet with essential oils. Essential oils are distilled from plants and are more potent than perfume. Lavender, peppermint, and wintergreen can help relieve the tension in muscles and make you feel relaxed.

If you do not have a diffuser, try adding a few drops of an essential oil to water in a spray bottle and spray the room or your meditation corner. Here are some possibilities:

- geranium oil—reduces fatigue and nervousness
- rose oil—promotes restful sleep
- Roman chamomile oil—reduces muscle spasms, promotes sleep, and reduces anxiety
- lavender—promotes sleep and improves mood
- lemon oil—reduces fatigue.

Use the essential oils in these ways:

- herbal teas
- baths
- massage oils

Good Nutrition

Believe it or not, good nutrition plays a role in reducing stress. Your body needs adequate nutrients and vitamins and minerals to support you when your body is under stress. If you do not eat right, your body's immune system will break down.

Eating more fruits and vegetables, such as spinach and citrus fruits, can help. They provide you with vitamins such as E and C. They are the antioxidants that fight the free radicals that attack your body when under stress.

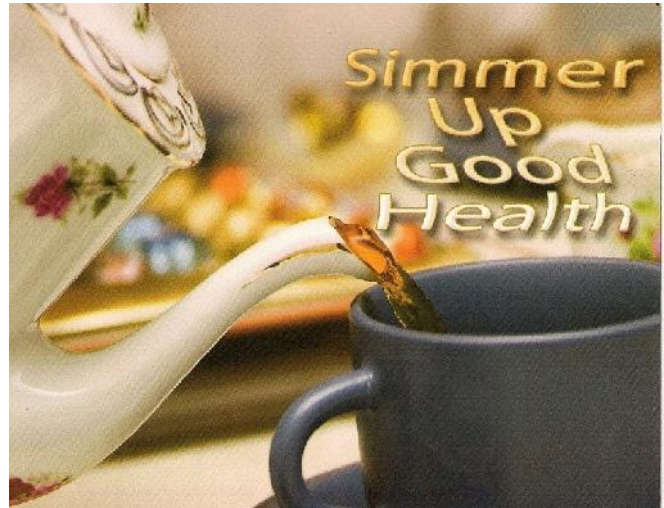
A diet high in omega fatty acids, such as those found in salmon, can protect you against heart disease. And remember when Grandma said, "Don't forget your roughage"? Fiber helps to lower your cholesterol and blood glucose levels and to maintain your body weight.

Nuts are good for you, too; however, you must watch your portion sizes, because too many can increase your cholesterol levels.

Water is good, too. Drinking eight to ten glasses a day can prevent dehydration, which can make you feel tired.

Simmer Away Stress

There are herbal teas that will help you to relax. Chamomile tea is a great one to use. Steam the water for three to five minutes and let your tea bag simmer for another two to three minutes.



Invite friends, family, or co-workers over for a good pot of tea and some talk. Talking can help release the pain, anger, and anxiety from stress. Invite people you can trust.

One day, I called a friend. I was crying out to her about how my business had taken a low turn. We talked and laughed together. After I hung up the phone, I received three calls resulting in three new clients. Wow, talking lets go of anger and stress!

Remember this saying:

***Joy shared is twice the joy;
Sorrow shared is half the sorrow.***

Three Foods that Can Contribute to Stress

1. **Sugary foods** give you a quick high and then your energy spirals downward. You know what happens after eating a meal high in sugar. Eating cupcakes or doughnuts at 2 P.M. means you'll feel sleepy by 3 P.M.

2. **Alcohol** drains your energy level. You are not focused.

3. **Caffeine** keeps you awake at night. Limit the amount you drink during the day, and do not drink coffee before going to bed.

Journaling Your Stress Away

Researchers have said, writing keeps the stress away. It is a way to release anxiety and anger. Writing keeps you aware of who or what situations stress you.

Don't worry about your grammar; just write. And if you are the kind of person who wants a more-detailed journal, then write what is stressing you and how you can overcome that stress.

Here are some examples of journaling:

- Write a letter to someone who causes stress in your life. DON'T SEND IT. Just write and leave out nothing. Phew. You will feel relieved. Then write another letter, but, this time, write on a positive level.
- Write how your day was. And ask yourself, what could I have done to change it?
- Make a stress chart (rate your level on a scale from 1, least stressed, to 5, highly stressed). Here's an example:

Stressor	Stress Level	My Reaction	What I Did to Change It
heavy traffic	5	tight shoulders; yelling at the cars	played jazz, gospel music
co-worker erased my document	5	yelled at my co-worker	discussed with co-worker about not touching my computer; apologized to co-worker

Now make your own chart:

Stressor	Stress Level	My Reaction	What I Did to Change It

Meditation

Some people consider praying as talking to God and meditation as listening to God. Meditation is preparing your mind to be still and calm and not jumping from thought to thought. It has been practiced for hundreds of years. All you do is sit or lie down for a few minutes and relax the mind and body.

(If you are not comfortable with meditation, then skip this chapter.)

Research has shown that meditation lowers the heart rate and blood pressure; reduces stress, anxiety, and depression; and lessens headaches.

Several groups and religions teach people how to meditate. I use meditation to calm my nerves and clear my mind.

Exercise 1: Stare into a candle and look at its flame. Do not think about your to-do list. Just watch the flame for a few minutes.

It may seem easy to stare, but a lot of people cannot be quiet for a few minutes and just look at something.

Start for one minute, then gradually increase to five.

Exercise 2: Listen to music (no singing, just instrumental) for a few minutes. Do this every day after you come home from work or before you go to bed, to help relax you.

Exercise 3: Say positive affirmations to yourself to help reduce your stressors.

Here are some examples from my book, *Transformations: Give UP The Struggle*:

Let your choice be led by the Spirit.

I will not let fear disturb my peace of mind.

The more I resist change, the more I need to change

Seeing Things through a Different Lens

Sometimes is it not *what* we see but *how* we see things that determines our stress level.

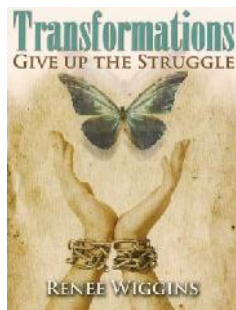
Learn to turn obstacles into opportunities and hardships into helpers that can move you forward.

Not every storm in your life will bring destruction; some storms were meant to move you from one place to another. In other words, these storms are meant to reposition you to a better place. The events or circumstances and even people that cause stress in our lives are there for a reason.

And, if you choose to remain the victim, you will never move to a better place. My mother used to say, "This too shall pass." Storms or negative situations are only temporary.

Look back over the past week. Did someone or something cause stress in your life? And, if so, can you change it, or can you change how you looked at the situation?

*Before I change my thoughts, I must
release the old thoughts and beliefs.*



(from Transformations: Give UP The Struggle)

Breathing Exercises

Breathing can slow down your heart rate and reduce anxiety and stress. Here are a few exercises to try.

Exercise 1:

Inhale to a count of 1-2-3-4-5.

Pause for a count of 1-2-3-4.

Exhale for a count of 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8.

Rest and breathe normally.

Then repeat.

(Start for one minute and then gradually increase to five minutes.)

Exercise 2: Rest your hands on your stomach and slowly and deeply inhale through your nose, pushing your hands outwards. Then slowly exhale, contracting your stomach towards your spine.

Start with one minute and gradually work up to five minutes. Do this every day. You will be amazed at how relaxed you feel.

Learn to Say No

Today, people feel they have to do everything, and that multitasking proves you are a superwoman or superman.

But, in fact, doing too many things at one time can exhaust your body and mind. Learn to delegate. Say no and mean it; stick with NO. You shouldn't have to explain why you do not want another task. Split the household activities with your spouse and your children.

When scheduling your calendar, first write in "ME-time" for yourself. When I wanted to rest, I would schedule a meeting with myself. Write it in your calendar; otherwise you will not follow through.

And do not schedule any other event or thing during your "ME-time."

What should you do during that time?

NOTHING. That is right—NOTHING.

- Listen to soft music.
- Stay in bed.
- Serve yourself breakfast in bed.
- Take a long herbal bath.
- Sit in your corner and read a book.

This is not the time to plan a grocery list or your dinner. This is the time you spend with yourself and relax.

About the Author

Renee Wiggins is a registered and licensed dietician, licensed massage therapist, and Certified Health and Wellness Coach, whose mission is helping people achieve a healthier lifestyle. She encourages, motivates, and coaches you to a higher level. Renee wants the best from and for you.



Renee is the author of *Can I Exercise Sitting Down?; Stress Down and Lift UP*, a 30-day healthy life plan to reduce stress in your life; and *Transformations: Give UP The Struggle*, a collection of affirmations that can provide a turning point in your life. Renee illustrates that obstacles can be overcome. Imagine them simply as ripples in a pond that lead you to your VICTORY.

Renee specializes in developing lifestyle programs for her clients. Her services include weight management, diabetes counseling, coaching, and workshops.

Soon to be released is her next book, *Being Fabulously Fit for God's Kingdom: A 40-Day Spiritual and Physical Journey to Wellness*.

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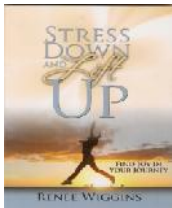
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Books By Renee Wiggins, RD/LD

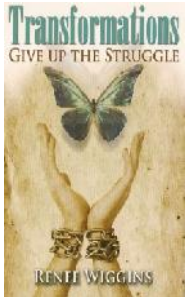
Can I Exercise
Sitting
Down?



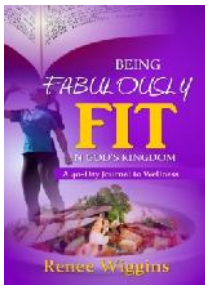
Can I Exercise Sitting Down?



Stress Down and Lift UP- Find Joy In Your Journey



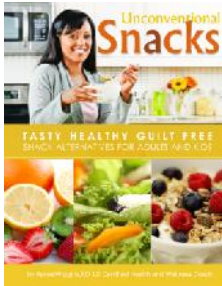
Transformations: Give UP The Struggle



Being Fabulously Fit For God's Kingdom: A 40-Day Journey to Wellness

eBooks By Renee Wiggins, RD/LD

- Unconventional Snacks: Tasty Healthy Guilt Free Snacks Alternatives for Adults and Kids



- Beyond Hypertension: A pinch of prevention



- Essentials to Beating Stress: Tools You can use to Relax, Release and Let Go



- Comfort Foods: Are They Hurting Us

