

TIP SHEET FOR RELATIVES AS PARENTS

PROVEN STRESS RELIEVERS

Any suggestions about relieving stress should be comfortable for you and for your life. No one thing relieves stress for everyone. Only you know what works for you. Look at your life; try out some things that fit in fairly easily. If you are very busy, don't try joining a gym; you won't end up having time to go to it! You know yourself best. The following suggestions are not in any particular order, so any one of these might be the most stress-relieving for you. Just try one! If that's not satisfying, try another.

Effective Stress Relievers:

- Listen to music; sing.
- Take a little walk.
- Wear comfortable clothing; take off your shoes when you can!
- Find humor wherever you can. In your situation, in a joke, watching the Marx Brothers, wherever.
- Try to get sleep.
- Try some deep breathing. Even three breaths will help. 10 minutes helps even more.
- Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning. Then if there are mishaps or crises, you've got extra time, and if there aren't, you've got a little breathing space!
- Don't rely on your memory. Write things down. Make lists. Use post-its.
- Be prepared to wait (at the doctor, etc.). Bring a book. If you're taking a child, bring a book for them or a game or cards.
- Don't procrastinate, it just adds to the stress.
- Allow 15 minutes extra to get to appointments.
- Eliminate or restrict caffeine.
- Relax your standards. Does that task REALLY have to get done today?
- Say NO! Saying "No" to extra projects, social activities, and invitations you know you don't have time for takes practice. Remind yourself that everyone needs down time at home. Your kids need down time too.
- Check your breathing throughout the day. Slow it down. Deepen it.
- When you need to calm yourself, do your deep breathing exercise. Remember 3 breaths will do.
- Go outside at least once per day and notice the world and the weather.
- Talk to your friends. This will help clear your mind so that you can problem-solve.
- Learn to live one day at a time.
- Every day, find something you can enjoy.
- Schedule a realistic day.
- Allow yourself a little bit of quiet time each day.
- If an especially unpleasant task faces you, do it early and get it over with.
- Forget about counting to 10. Try counting to 1000 before saying something you might regret.
- Have a forgiving view of events and people. Have a forgiving view of yourself.
- Believe that you are doing the best you can. And that is good enough. In fact, it's great. You are doing an amazing thing!

Probably the most effective stress relievers are deep breathing and listening to music. (Singing might combine those two.) Listening to music can reduce the stress chemicals in your brain by 66%. When you try deep breathing, pull the in-breath down by sucking up on your diaphragm; let it out and pull in another. Even **three** breaths can produce a calm feeling.

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