

Ask an Expert – April is Stress Awareness Month: Press Pause with These Eight Stress-Relieving Activities

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April is National Stress Awareness Month, dedicated to increasing awareness about the causes, effects, and management of stress.

Regular negative stress can keep us from feeling and performing our best, so it is important to learn how to manage it. Stepping away – even for just 20 minutes – can be beneficial in gaining a new perspective. Consider one or more of these activities to help you destress.

1. Yoga – Yoga is excellent for improving physical strength, flexibility, balance, and heart health while reducing stress, anxiety, and chronic pain.
2. Art – Before you say, “But I’m not an artist,” a recent study shows that engaging in a creative activity for 45 minutes significantly relieves stress in the body, regardless of experience or talent.
3. Exercise – Along with physical benefits, research continues to show how exercise can have an immediate stress-relieving effect that can last for hours.
4. Go outside –The combined physical, mental, and social benefits of being outdoors can contribute to overall well-being and longevity. “Nature is not a luxury, but a necessity. We need the calming influence of green spaces to cleanse our souls and rejuvenate our spirits.” - Frederick Law Olmsted
5. Laugh – Many of us tend to hold stress in our faces. Since our emotions and facial expressions are interconnected, laughing or smiling can relieve tension.
6. Socialize – According to the CDC, staying connected to others creates feelings of belonging, being cared for, and valued. Social connections are important to our mental and physical health.

Being connected to others helps protect against serious illness and disease, and people with stronger social bonds are more likely to live longer, healthier lives.

7. Play or listen to music – Music can have an amazing effect on the body and mind. Faster music can make you feel more alert; upbeat music can make you feel more optimistic; and slower music can quiet your mind.
8. Meditate – Meditation and mindfulness can help the mind and body relax, gain a new perspective, and develop self-compassion. If you’re new to meditation or mindfulness, consider starting with deep breaths. Even just one deep breath can help relieve tension!

Press pause by trying one or several stress-reducing tips this month, and remember that managing stress is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle.

Contact

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