

# 7 Ways to Relieve Stress

Stress not only occupies our waking (and sometimes sleeping!) minds, fretting also causes harm to the body. And, there is no such thing as “just stress.” Left unchecked, chronic stress can affect your heart, blood pressure, digestive health, weight, ability to concentrate, and more.

Fortunately, there are ways to improve your stress levels naturally, easily, and safely. It can take practice to let go of old ideas and make room for relaxation and calm—but it can be done. Here are seven powerful stress-relieving tips from the holistic doctors at Healthy Directions. These tips are more than just advice; they are habits that the doctors practice in their own lives.

## 1 Try a stress-reducing herb.

Ashwagandha is a powerful herb that’s part of a group of herbs called adaptogens that help your body to adapt to stress. It works by helping to stabilize and rebalance your body’s stress feedback loop, so it releases less cortisol. You can think of it as your “protective armor” against life’s stressors.

## 2 Get your feet dirty.

One of my cardinal principles of health is called grounding; it’s an amazingly simple concept that involves nothing more than reconnecting the human body with the energy naturally present in the ground we walk on by walking around outside on grass, dirt, concrete or sand barefoot. Yes, really! Grounding’s many physical benefits include lowered

stress and increased calmness in the body by moderating heart rate variability, nervous system activity, and stress hormone secretion.

**Dr. Stephen Sinatra**

## 3 Get more sleep!

We all know the importance of a good night’s sleep and how we feel the following morning. We also know that consistent high-quality sleep helps reduce stress and improve overall health.

Do your best to have the best sleep experience possible. Dim the lights at home in the hours before you go to sleep. Make sure the bedroom is completely dark and cool if possible. Avoid adrenaline/dopamine-promoting activities before bed like TV watching, scary movies, or video games. In fact, avoid screens in general before bed including iPads, iPhones, TVs, and computers as these devices emit blue light which can suppress melatonin

production. If you can, try to go to sleep before 10 pm each night and aim for 7–9 hours of sleep per night. Sweet dreams!

**Dr. Drew Sinatra**

## 4 Make time for you.

Make a point to take a little time each day for yourself by reserving an hour to do something that feels good just for you. I suggest reading, praying, deep breathing, taking a bath, aromatherapy, and as crazy as it might sound, simply smiling. The act of smiling registers in the hypothalamus of your brain, where endorphins are produced, which is why you immediately feel better when you smile. So, the next time you’re feeling stressed, bring back a happy memory—and put a real smile on your face.

**Dr. Julian Whitaker**

## 5 Let go of physical stress.

When we’re stressed, we feel it all over—from tense muscles to headaches. So, it’s important to let go of your physical stress. You might not even know how much physical stress you’re carrying until you try this exercise.

Start by lying flat on your back with a pillow to support your neck and head and with your hands at your sides. Beginning with your toes, first tense the muscles, then allow them to relax completely. From there, move to your feet, lower legs, thighs and so on until you finish with your neck and head.

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Don't move onto the next body part until the part you are working on is totally relaxed.

Relaxing may be difficult on the first try, especially when you reach certain areas (like the neck or shoulder areas). Don't be surprised if you fall asleep the first several times.

**Dr. David Williams**

## 6 Make every day Thanksgiving.

The more you pay attention and focus on the good things in your life, the more you will notice all the things you have to be grateful for. Be thankful for every sunrise you see, every good meal you eat, time you enjoy yourself with family and friends, and the possessions and activities that give you pleasure. If it's a sunny day, be grateful. If it's a rainy day, be grateful anyway—it makes the ducks happy.

**Dr. Joseph Pergolizzi**

## 7 Move it!

Moving your body daily in a way that you enjoy is incredibly beneficial, whether it is walking, jogging, Pilates, Yoga, hiking, or whatever you like. Regular exercise reduces the harmful effects of stress, plus it releases feel-good endorphins. You will not only feel better afterwards, the positive stress-reducing impact of exercise lasts long after you put your sneakers away. Physical activity is the cheapest, easiest, and fastest DIY attitude adjuster!

**Dr. Briana Sinatra**

**Try one, some, or all of the above suggestions.** All you have to lose is your stress! Please let us know if you tried any of these ways and how they worked for you at [facebook.com/HealthyDirections](https://facebook.com/HealthyDirections)



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