

Keep Your Stress in Check

I was sitting on a plane recently, eagerly waiting while the 20 rows of travelers ahead of me gathered their things from underneath their seats and overhead bins. It was nearly my turn to exit when I overheard a conversation between two women a row ahead of me. One had just pulled her scientific poster presentation from the overhead while the other grabbed her own from beneath her seat. “You must be going to the pharmacy conference too.” The first woman said. “Yes”, the other replied, “but only to present this,” holding up her poster, “I’m out of here as soon as the session is over.” She then explained she would only be there for one day before she needed to turn around and head home for other work and family obligations. As I contemplated by own “full plate” and looked around the plane and all the other busy passengers, I realized that stress is a fact of life. And while it keeps us motivated, it’s important to know how to manage it so it doesn’t get out of hand. Here are some simple ways to beat stress.

Take a deep breath, or two or more. Long, deep calming breaths will help you relax and keep you mind off of negative emotions and help keep you focused.

Eat well. With jam packed schedules it’s easy to fall in the rut of eating unhealthy processed foods and sugary snacks that are easy to obtain. The problem is that while you think your quick fix is helping out it’s really depleting your energy. Take the time to eat well – and remember to drink plenty of water, while you're at it. You'll more than make up any lost time through improved productivity and increased focus.

Exercise. Even if it’s just a brisk walk at lunch or in the morning before your shower, you’ll feel revitalized and energized!

Sleep. Chances are you’re not getting enough sleep. In order to maximize performance make sure you're getting plenty of undisrupted sleep each night (6 to 8 hours for most people). Establish regular nighttime routines, stay away from caffeine, alcohol, and stimulating activities. Try reading a book, taking a bath or mediating for a few minutes before dozing off.

It’s not easy to make lifestyle changes without guaranteed results. But even if you just incorporate one of these stress busting strategies you’ll gradually begin to feel better and the others will gradually fall into place as well.