

Office Stress Busters

Breathe in, breathe out

Fighting workday stress can be as simple as taking a deep breath- from your diaphragm. Most people breathe from their chests when they're feeling out of sorts. That means less oxygen reaches the bloodstream and brain, the heart rate increases and tension runs amuck.

If you breathe from your diaphragm muscle instead, a more appropriate carbon dioxide-oxygen exchange will occur in your blood, which leads to a feeling of relaxation.

One-a-day relief

Before you head to the office, head to the medicine chest and take a stress-fighting vitamin or natural herb. B-complex vitamins help the body handle stress by maintaining the nervous system.

If you're a naturalist at heart, try taking adaptogens-herbs that promote mental and physical balance. Favourite adaptogens include various ginsengs, valerian, kava root, echinacea and goldenseal. As always, it's best to check with your physician before adding supplements to your diet.

Sweeten up your life

You may not have to fight your mid-afternoon sweet tooth after all. In moderation, indulging your chocolate cravings can actually help temper your stress.

Research confirms that cacao liquor polyphenol (CLP) - a major ingredient in chocolate - is a powerful antioxidant that enhances the activity of the immune system. Thus, making it a natural choice during times of stress or depression.

Rub it in

When you're feeling overwhelmed, try rubbing an essential oil, such as lavender, sage or patchouli into your temples. The appealing aroma evokes calm, plus your temples are a pressure point, so the mini massage will ease your tension.

To find out which oils work for you, sample some scents at your favourite beauty supply shop.

Designed to relax

Instead of staring at the blank walls of your cubicle, decorate your workspace with family photos, mementos and artwork that inspires you.

Next time you're feeling bogged down from a seemingly insurmountable to-do list, gaze around at pictures of loved ones and your favourite artists' creations and you may be surprised at how much more at ease you feel.

