

Health Notes

Relaxation to Relieve Summer Stress

Relaxation is an important part of being healthy; physically, mentally, and spiritually. Summertime offers more options for relaxation because of the wonderful climate in the Midwest with opportunities to be outdoors and be more active. Making time for relaxation in your day-to-day life can not only improve your health, but it can certainly improve your quality of life.



Relaxation is not only about enjoying a hobby, a sport, or a new activity; it is a process that decreases the stress effects on your mind, body, and spirit. The benefits of relaxation include: slowed heart rate; lowered blood pressure; slowed breathing; improved digestion; controlled blood sugar levels; reduced cholesterol levels; reduced activity of stress hormones; increased blood flow to major muscles; reduced muscle tension and chronic pain; improved focus and mood; improved sleep quality; lowered fatigue levels; reduced anger and frustration; and boosting of our self-confidence to handle day-to-day problems and life stresses.

Relaxation techniques of many kinds can help you cope with everyday stresses as well as the long-term stresses of illness, recovery, and healing. Techniques you might choose could be: Taking brief walks, each day; listening to music you enjoy, while sitting quietly in nature, in the sunshine, or in the solitude of your favorite spot; reaching out to the supportive family and friends in your life who understand, love you, and care for you; spending time in meditation, using specific techniques of your choice; spending time in prayer and having quiet moments to communicate with God; getting enough sleep; doing regular exercise you enjoy; journaling about key events in your day; working on setting priorities; finding humor when you can; and taking a positive approach to each day and to life. Having a positive approach to each day makes us more resilient, open to new experiences, flexible and tolerant.

Your summer schedule does not have to be strict or rigid, but it should include daily habits that provide brief periods of relaxation which give you a break from the present work and tension you might be experiencing. Thereby, allowing you to restore your energy and fill your personal reservoir of resilience and your ability to cope. Relaxation can really be effective and have a lasting impact on your overall health.

Lastly, incorporating relaxation into your daily life can really help you develop an overall attitude and positive approach to each new day.

Resources: Mayo Clinic on Relaxation; Stress relievers: Tips to tame stress.

