

7 Days to a Stress-Free You

You know the symptoms: your shoulders tighten, your heart races, your mind spins, and you have difficulty sleeping. Unfortunately, stress is something all too familiar for far too many of us. If left unchecked, some serious health conditions can occur—including type 2 diabetes, heart problems, migraines, digestive disorders, and early aging.

This seven-day manual will assist in leading you through the many facets of living a stress-free existence. Each day contains an essential skill, a tip to execute that skill, and a mood-boosting recipe to put you on the path to a more relaxed you. By week's end, you'll have gained the tools to assist you in leading a tranquil life day-in and day-out.

*Reviewed and Approved by Debra Warner, Psy.d.,
Forensic Psychologist and QualityHealth Advisory Board Member*

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7 Days to a Stress-Free **You**

QualityHealth®

Learn to Vent

When we acknowledge and allow ourselves to express our emotions in a healthy way, our self-understanding and acceptance improves, our body and mind feel cleansed, and we feel freer, happier, and most definitely, healthier.

Take Action: Talk it Out

If you feel angry or upset with someone, speak with her about it. Sometimes just saying, "I feel angry," feeling it in your body, and then explaining why you are angry, can be the key to cleansing out the anger.

Eat to De-stress: Complex Carbs

Complex carbohydrates (those that are derived from whole grains) open the door for the amino acid tryptophan to enter the brain. This can have a relaxing effect.

**Continue for a
Relaxing Recipe**



Relaxing Recipe: Banana Whole Wheat Biscuits

Day 1



NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING

Calories	130
% Calories from Fat 17.3%	
Total Fat	2.5g
Saturated Fats	1.5g
Monounsaturated Fats	0.6g
Polyunsaturated Fats	0.2g
Cholesterol	6mg
Sodium	77mg
Total Carbohydrates	27g
Dietary Fiber	1.4g
Sugar	11g
Protein	23g

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup all purpose flour
- ½ cup whole grain flour
- ¼ tsp nutmeg
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 tbsp lowfat vanilla yogurt
- ¼ cup ripe mashed bananas
- 1½ tbsp unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tbsp lowfat milk
- ½ cup apricot preserves

COOKING DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 450°F. Sift together first 7 ingredients in a food processor or mixing bowl. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse meal. Stir in remaining ingredients, except preserves, until mixture is moistened. Do not overwork.

Transfer dough onto a lightly floured work surface. Let stand for 5 minutes. Knead dough 3-4 times. Roll dough out until it is about ½ inch thick. Cut biscuits with cookie cutter and place on lightly oiled baking sheet. Bake about 8 minutes until biscuits are golden. Serve with preserves.

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Think Positively

If you're the type who sees the bad in everything, you might be hurting more than just your social life. Several studies have revealed that those who think positively actually live better and longer than those whose glass is perpetually half empty. Changing the way you think can help you reduce stress, boost your immune system, lower your risk of coronary artery disease, breathe easier if you suffer from lung problems, and aid you in feeling better and healthier overall.

Take Action: Don't Take it Personally

Be wary of personalizing situations. If a friend cancels plans, don't assume it's because of something you did. Remind yourself there are many reasons she may have cancelled, including illness or a work deadline that may not include you.

Eat to De-stress: Dark Chocolate

In a study conducted by researchers at the Nestle Research Center in Lausanne, Switzerland, and published in the *Journal of Proteome Research*, researchers found participants who ate 1.4 ounces (a standard sized bar) of dark chocolate every day for two weeks had a reduction in their levels of the stress hormones cortisol and catecholamines.

**Continue for a
Relaxing Recipe**



Relaxing Recipe: Dark Chocolate Soufflé

Day 2



NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING

Calories 520
% Calories from Fat 57.1%

Total Fat 33g
Saturated Fats 17g
Monounsaturated Fats 11g
Polyunsaturated Fats 2.4g

Cholesterol 300mg

Sodium 230mg

Total Carbohydrates 51g
Dietary Fiber 2.1g
Sugar 44g

Protein 11g

in center of oven. Bake 25 minutes. Increase heat to 475°F. Very gently remove soufflé from oven. Dust top of soufflé with half the confectioners sugar. Return soufflé to oven and bake another 5 minutes or until browned. Remove from oven. Sprinkle with remaining confectioners sugar.

Preparation time: 15 min Cooking time: 35 min Servings: 4

INGREDIENTS

1½ tsp vanilla extract
2 tbsp unsalted butter, softened
5 oz fine dark chocolate, finely chopped
⅓ cup sugar, more for sprinkling
½ cup heavy cream
5 eggs, separated, yolks beaten, whites
 beaten to hold stiff peaks
2 tbsp all purpose flour
¼ cup confectioners sugar

COOKING DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400°F. Bring cream and ⅓ cup sugar to a boil in a heavy saucepan over medium high heat. Immediately remove from heat. Add chocolate and butter, whisking constantly until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth. Combine egg yolks, flour, and vanilla in a mixing bowl. Beat with an electric mixer or whisk until pale yellow. With mixer running, slowly add half the chocolate mixture. Gradually beat in remaining chocolate and set aside.

Gently fold ¼ of egg whites into chocolate mixture. Fold in remaining egg whites. Grease a 1 quart soufflé dish and sprinkle with 1 tbsp sugar. Transfer mixture into soufflé dish. Place

Exercise Regularly

A study conducted by the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association listed the top two benefits of exercise as improving emotional well-being and reducing stress. Working out can also promote better sleep, reduce muscle tension, lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol, and raise body temperature—all of which can help banish your bad mood.

Take Action: Try Power Walking

Studies have found that walking allows the body to release adrenaline and endorphins. Adrenaline plays a key role in your nervous system and in boosting your mood, while endorphins help create a sense of happiness and relieve pain.

Eat to De-stress: Bananas

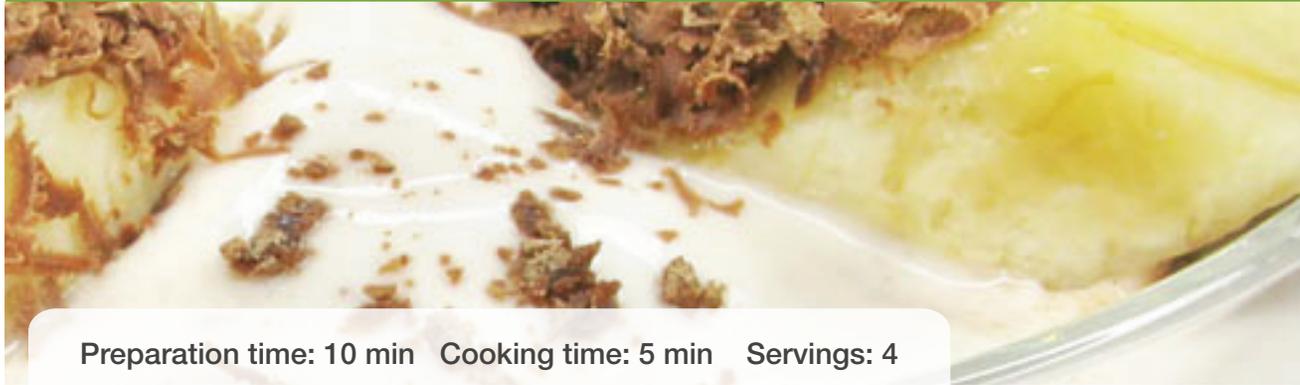
Bananas contain large amounts of tryptophan, which has been shown to allow the brain to release melatonin and serotonin. The release of these chemicals produces a relaxed, soothing effect.

Continue for a
Relaxing Recipe



Relaxing Recipe: Cardamom Baked Bananas with Yogurt

Day 3



Preparation time: 10 min Cooking time: 5 min Servings: 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups lowfat vanilla yogurt
- ½ tsp cardamom
- 4 firm bananas, peeled and cut diagonally into ½ inch slices
- ⅓ cup dark brown sugar, packed
- 1½ tbsp unsalted butter

COOKING DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 450°F. Arrange banana slices in a buttered baking dish. Sprinkle with 2 tbsp of brown sugar, butter, and cardamom. Bake for 5 minutes. Remove from oven. Sprinkle with remaining brown sugar. Gently toss to combine. Serve bananas with yogurt.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING

Calories 320
% Calories from Fat 16.3%
Total Fat 5.8g
Saturated Fats 3.6g
Monounsaturated Fats 1.5g
Polyunsaturated Fats 0.3g
Cholesterol 16mg
Sodium 88mg
Total Carbohydrates 64g
Dietary Fiber 3.1g
Sugar 51g
Protein 7.4g

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Get Your Z's

Mental health problems and insomnia are linked in both directions. Stress, depression, and anxiety can cause insomnia, and insomnia can exacerbate stress and depression. Studies have found that about half the people who experience insomnia blame it on stress and worry.

Take Action: Keep a Regular Bed and Waking Time

If you normally rise with the sun to get ready for work, you'll no doubt be tempted to sleep in on your days off. Don't. Your brain's "circadian clock" regulates your sleep-wake cycle, and upsetting this rhythm can interfere with your ability to fall asleep at night.

Eat to De-stress: Honey

It's high in antioxidants and B vitamins and is known for its antibacterial effect. Honey can also help you get to sleep quicker. Although too much sugar can be stimulating, a small amount of glucose tells your brain to shut off orexin, a chemical known to trigger sleep disorders.

**Continue for a
Relaxing Recipe**



Relaxing Recipe: Honeyed Chicken Rolls

Day 4



Preparation time: 10 min Cooking time: 45 min Servings: 6

INGREDIENTS

- 6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- ½ cup almonds, toasted
- ⅓ cup honey
- 2 tsp curry powder
- 3 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 6 toothpicks

COOKING DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F. Roll chicken breasts and secure with toothpicks. Combine honey, mustard, and curry. Pour over chicken, coating all sides carefully. Bake 45 minutes to 1 hour. Sprinkle with toasted almonds before serving.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING

Calories 420
% Calories from Fat 25.7%

Total Fat 12g
Saturated Fats 2.2g
Monounsaturated Fats 6.1g
Polyunsaturated Fats 2.8g

Cholesterol 150mg

Sodium 130mg

Total Carbohydrates 20g
Dietary Fiber 1.5g
Sugar 18g

Protein 56g

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Manage Financial Stress

A survey conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA) in 2008 found that 80 percent of Americans said their biggest worry is money and half of them report having symptoms such as raised blood pressure, disturbed sleep, and a weakened immune system due to the stress.

Take Action: Keep Perspective

Although the situation may seem dire, you will come out of it stronger. The APA cautions against overreacting. Remember to take some time to read a book, watch a movie, or just relax. The situation that's causing you stress won't disappear, but stepping away from it may help bring clarity and new insights on how to cope.

Eat to De-stress: Fatty Fish

Fatty fish, such as salmon or mackerel, are loaded with cortisol-regulating omega-3 fatty acids.

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Relaxing Recipe



Relaxing Recipe: Seared Salmon with Summer Squash

Day 5



Preparation time: 10 min Cooking time: 25 min Servings: 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp dill, chopped
- 2 cups yellow squash, sliced
- 2 cups fresh corn kernels, cut from the cob
- 1 tbsp fresh basil, chopped
- 2 cups zucchini, sliced
- 4 salmon fillets, salt to taste
- 1/8 tsp black pepper, cracked
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 lemon

COOKING DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Season the salmon fillets on both sides with salt and pepper. Heat 1 tbsp of olive oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Sear the fillets on both sides until they are golden around the edges, about 3 minutes per side.

Transfer the seared fish to a baking sheet and continue cooking the fish in the oven until it is just cooked through, about 5 to 10 more minutes. Meanwhile, heat 1 tbsp of olive oil in a medium-size skillet over high heat. Add the summer squash and zucchini and sauté for 1 minute. Add the mushrooms and cook for 4 more minutes. Add the garlic, tomatoes, and corn and cook for 1 to 2 minutes more. Add the

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING

Calories 540
% Calories from Fat 31.7%

Total Fat 19g
Saturated Fats 2.9g
Monounsaturated Fats 8.1g
Polyunsaturated Fats 5.5g

Cholesterol 170mg

Sodium 230mg

Total Carbohydrates 25g
Dietary Fiber 4.3g
Sugar 3.9g

Protein 68g

dill and basil and remove from the heat.

Place a bed of vegetables on each plate. Place a piece of fish on top of the vegetables and drizzle each fillet with fresh lemon juice.

Work Out Workplace Stress

For millions of Americans, work stress is an all-too common reality—and it's seemingly getting worse. Technology such as cell phones, emails, and text messaging increasingly causes job stress to spill over into our personal lives. In some cases, this can lead to severe illnesses, including depression.

Take Action: Communicate with Coworkers

If you're having problems with your boss or a colleague, don't ignore it. Try to build bridges. Find out what you can do to improve the situation. Use "I" statements instead of "you" statements. If dealing with superiors directly doesn't take the edge off the situation, try mediation through a supervisor.

Eat to De-stress: Almonds

Almonds contain a dynamic duo of calming ingredients. They're known to be high in both magnesium—which acts as a muscle relaxer—and tryptophan.

Continue for a
Relaxing Recipe



Relaxing Recipe: Spinach Almondine

Day 6



Preparation time: 5 min Cooking time: 10 min Servings: 4

INGREDIENTS

¼ cup slivered almonds
1 tbsp unsalted butter
2 lb spinach, rinsed, trimmed
Salt and pepper, to taste

COOKING DIRECTIONS

Melt butter in a heavy, nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Sauté almonds for 3-4 minutes, or until golden. Transfer almonds to a bowl. Add spinach to skillet.

Cover tightly and cook 4-5 minutes stirring occasionally until spinach wilts. Stir in buttered almonds. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING

Calories 140
% Calories from Fat 52.7%

Total Fat 8.2g
Saturated Fats 2.4g
Monounsaturated Fats 2.8g
Polyunsaturated Fats 1.8g

Cholesterol 7.6mg

Sodium 220mg

Total Carbohydrates 12g
Dietary Fiber 9.2g
Sugar 1.4g

Protein 11g

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Learn to Handle the Holidays

Research conducted by the National Mental Health Association found that Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is caused by less exposure to sunlight during shorter winter days, can compound holiday stress. Fatigue, financial constraints, the inability to be with friends and family, and lofty expectations also contribute to holiday seasonal stress.

Take Action: Simplify Your Schedule

Simplify your schedule so that you have one special event in time increments that you can manage; for example, one per weekend. If that means prioritizing or splitting time with your partner, then do so. Be sure to review dates of school events, family parties, or social outings so that you have enough time to request days off work or hire a babysitter.

Eat to De-stress: Oranges

Oranges are packed with vitamin C, which has been found to be a great regulator of a variety of stress hormones, all while boosting your immune system.

**Continue for a
Relaxing Recipe**



Relaxing Recipe: Jicama and Orange Salad

Day 7



Preparation time: 10 min Cooking time: 0 min Servings: 4

INGREDIENTS

- 3 oranges, peeled, white pith removed and cut into ¼ inch slices
- ½ lb jicama, peeled and cut into thin strips
- ¼ cup black olives, drained
- 1 large red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 lb garden salad
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1½ tbsp lemon juice
- ¼ tsp cumin seed
- 1 cup herb croutons
- Salt and pepper, to taste

COOKING DIRECTIONS

Combine the first 5 ingredients in a salad bowl and toss to combine. Combine olive oil, lemon juice, and cumin seed in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Shake vigorously until emulsified. Pour dressing over salad, season with salt and pepper to taste, and toss before serving with croutons.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING

Calories	280
% Calories from Fat 54.6%	
Total Fat	17g
Saturated Fats 2.6g	
Monounsaturated Fats 12g	
Polyunsaturated Fats 1.9g	
Cholesterol	0.7mg
Sodium	230mg
Total Carbohydrates	31g
Dietary Fiber 8.1g	
Sugar 13g	
Protein	45g

7 Days To A Leaner You



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