

Move More, Stress Less

Five fun and easy ideas for using movement to relieve stress this summer

1. Get out on trail

If you have access to wilderness areas, city parks or other local trail systems, trail time is a true winner for fun and easy stress reduction. You can run, hike, bike, meander or stroll, whatever feels good to your body. Being active in the great outdoors is a wonderful way to clear the mind, get grounded and deepen your connection to the place you live. Running, hiking, and biking are also just great exercise, and will give the body many other health benefits as well.

2. Take a cruise on your bike

The sensation of cruising around town on your bike is sure to bring a smile to your face and help you beat stress this summer. Biking is a fun and gentle way to include movement in your day, since there's very little impact on your body and its joints. Some people love just biking through their neighborhood, but you can also give yourself a mission and replace car time with bike time; like biking to the store to pick up dinner ingredients, or biking to/from work.

3. Dance

Seriously! Even just turning up the jams and dancing to some favorite songs in your kitchen will do wonders for relieving stress. It's easy and totally low pressure. There's no one around to judge your dance moves or your sense of rhythm. You just get to MOVE your body and be authentically you. If you're feeling more social, you can also grab a group of friends and head out to enjoy some live music or your favorite dance vibes together. Bringing friends into the mix can also add that ultimate bonus stress-reducer: laughter!

4. River Time

There's no better way to beat the heat (and stress) of summer than connecting with our rivers! Whether this is paddle-boarding, boating, fly fishing, swimming or another activity, just being in the water is incredible therapy for a busy mind. We all know the relaxing feeling that comes with listening to the rhythm of moving water, and tapping into that feeling can really help calm the mind so we can let go of stress. No matter what river activity we personally enjoy, spending time playing in the water is rejuvenating in many ways.

5. Yard work

This one might sound weird, but if you have a yard, it might provide the perfect opportunity for you to release stress this summer. Outdoor "chores" like chopping wood, weeding, raking leaves or grass clippings, pruning trees and gardening are often very therapeutic. These activities give you a chance to be outside, to let your mind rest and to move your body in a very different way than traditional exercise. You'll get to activate all kinds of different movement patterns as you use various tools and move things around the yard. And as you move, you'll be able to rest your mind and let go of stress, since these chores usually aren't brain-busters. If you don't have your own yard, you might consider helping out an elderly neighbor or family member who might not be able to get this stuff done on their own.

Takeaway:

You can add any of these ideas into your daily or weekly routine by devoting just 20-30 minutes to them after the work day, or on the weekend. Whichever strategies you choose, remember to appreciate the space you're creating to process the day's events and release stress. It's a great step toward a more balanced body and mind!

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