

Top 10 Stress Busters For Teens

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Today's youth pack a lot into their busy schedule. Is it any wonder that approximately [8% of the adolescent population](#) has an anxiety disorder? Stress can play a toll on a teens' mental and physical health. Did you know [teens are reporting levels of stress](#) higher than adults report? That is cause for concern.

As teens feel the pressure to succeed in a nation that promotes competitiveness, they may be losing out on something very important: *their* [childhood](#). Why are we pushing our youth so hard? How can we teach them to cope? Following are 10 tips to help them deal with the everyday pressure of stress.

1. Eat Healthy. If you truly want to reduce your stress levels, then you have to take care of yourself. Begin by watching what you eat. If you eat a lot of junk food or even skip meals, then how can you expect to perform your best? Just as a car needs good fuel to run, your body needs nutrients to run efficiently.

2. Sleep. Your body needs rest. According to the [National Sleep Foundation](#) teens need between 8.5 and 9.25 hours of sleep. Don't skip on sleep because you have a lot to do; you will perform better if you get a good night's rest. Sleep is your body's automatic [meditation](#) mode. It helps you regroup and relax so you'll be ready to tackle the next day's tasks with a clearer mind.

3. Get Moving. It's not uncommon to get so bogged down that the last thing you want to do is get up and move. If you're thinking, "I don't have time to exercise," think again: A study published in the [Journal of School Health](#) shows that just two hours of extra exercise each week can improve your school performance. So not only is exercise good for you, it can help your grades. Sounds like a win/win.

4. Me Time. Take some time out of your busy day and spend it with a very important person: You. You need time to relax and have fun. It's important to

schedule some time into your busy day to do something you enjoy, like seeing a movie, reading a book, going shopping, or hanging out with friends.

5. Friend Time. Don't give your friends the shaft when school, athletics, clubs, work, etc., consume your time. Friends serve an important role in helping you cope. Don't keep them out of your life because you're busy; you need them.

6. Find Balance. Don't take on more than you can accomplish at once. Find a way to balance all of the things that are on your plate. You can start by making a to-do list and crossing off anything that doesn't need your immediate [attention](#). Practice managing your time and prioritizing what needs to be done so that you can work smarter, not harder.

7. Go Outside. How much time do you spend outside on a given day? If you said not much, then go outdoors. [Research](#) has shown that being outside improves your mood, which can improve your performance. Just a few extra minutes a day can make a big difference.

8. Take a Breath. One quick way to calm yourself quickly is to breathe. Often when you're [anxious](#) you breathe from your chest rather than from your abdomen. When you breathe from your chest your breath is shallow and you don't get the full benefit that a deep breath provides. Try this: Lie on the floor and put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach; now take a breath like you normally would. Do you feel your chest rise and fall or do you feel your abdomen inflate like a balloon? The goal is to have your abdomen inflate and deflate. Keep practicing taking deep, slow abdominal breaths. You should feel yourself start to relax.

9. Find Your [Sense of Humor](#). [Laughter](#) is often the best medicine for a [stressed-out](#) day. When you laugh your body begins to relax and release feel-good endorphins. Laughter can also keep you healthy by boosting the immune system, which stress likes to suppress. So go ahead watch a funny show, or crack a joke with a friend and notice how a little laughter can change your entire mood.

10. Get Your Zen On. Meditation is a great way to melt the stress away. Try one of these exercises:

Exercise #1: Focus on right now

- Go to a quiet place free from distractions.
- Find a piece of your favorite fruit.
- Use your five senses to study the fruit: Feel the texture, smell it, hear what it sounds like when you take a bite and chew, and taste it. Pay attention to only your senses.
- Can you silence everything else in that's going on in your life? Work hard to focus only on the here and now.

Exercise #2: Imagery

Have you ever wanted to escape to a special place? Now is your chance. This is a quick meditative way to go anyplace you want.

- Find a quiet, distraction-free place.
- Get in a comfortable position.
- Close your eyes.
- Imagine going to that special place. It could be a place where you have vacationed, a relative's home that holds positive memories, or a place you've always wanted to visit.

Spend time letting your mind wander and pretend that you are on a vacation; a mental vacation. When you're ready, open your eyes and return home. The cool thing about this technique is that you can do it anytime without even packing a suitcase. Meditating for just a few minutes a day can help you feel balanced, focused, and in control.

Take some time each day to incorporate some of these stress busters into your life. Not only will you feel relaxed, you'll also feel more balanced and in control.