Bust Your Daily Stress

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Whether you're hustling hard at your job, in school, managing a household, or running circles around your kids, there's a good chance you're dealing with some unaddressed stress. We're all guilty of it, sometimes because there's too much going on, and other times because we don't necessarily know how to deal with it.

Just like most women out there, I always just kind of disregarded stress as something that was just part of life, which it is, but over time it can also take its toll on your mental and physical wellbeing. Side effects of stress range from anxiety and irritability, to physical manifestations including fatigue, hormonal swings, an unhappy gut, and even certain autoimmune conditions.

Last year, awful anxiety, insomnia, a cystic acne breakout on my normally decent skin, and a crazy psoriasis flare-up forced me to re-evaluate my approach towards stress. Though some of it can be eliminated, a lot of it can't, and though vacations or massages are relaxing, they aren't a permanent solution. What finally helped me get my situation under control was to find ways to manage stress on an everyday basis, so here are some recommendation to stay sane in an often insane world:

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Exercise

This. Is. A. Must! I don't think there's any doubt about the fact that exercise is really essential for the human body, but it's especially crucial for those who are coping with stress.

For one, it provides a distraction from everything else happening in your life. For the duration of the activity you choose, it's just you and your body. Sometimes exercise is the only thing that can give you a much-needed break from the rest of your day.
As an added bonus, the endorphins your body produces during exercise can dramatically improve your mood, so you can return to your day feeling a bit more confident to handle things without letting them get the better of you.

Journaling

Don't be freaked out by this one- it's a lot simpler than you would think! I take a few minutes by myself, either first thing in the morning, or right before going to bed, and go through a little exercise.

I write down the three things that are bothering me the most, in bullet form, and in simple language, so I have to get to the core of the issue. Then I write down three things I'm grateful for, and then return to my three "problems," and, for each, I either decide that I can let go of it and not let it affect me, or what I'm going to do about it.

I always feel a little more in control after that, and acknowledging the things I'm grateful for puts things in perspective, and sometimes helps you realize that some of the things that stress you out are actually inconsequential.

Ashwagandha

Ashwagandha is an amazing plant, classified as an "adaptogen," which helps the body deal with stress. It also has incredible healing properties and can help with a whole slew of mental and physical issues, ranging from anxiety, to inflammation, to even some tumors.

Classically used in Ayurvedic medicine, Ashwaghanda can now be found in powder form pretty much anywhere. It's slightly bitter, so I wouldn't recommend putting it in smoothies or juices, but I like adding mine to my coffee, or mixing it with some hot almond milk, cinnamon, vanilla, and stevia.

Lavender Oil

Cliché as it may be, lavender oil is cliché for a reason! It's unrealistic to go sit in a spa everyday, but a little lavender oil on your pillow, a little dab behind each ear, or a bottle always nearby for a quick sniff, can help you feel as calm and as relaxed as if you were in a spa.

I'm really partial to using lavender oil on my pillow to help me relax at bedtime. It improves the restfulness of my sleep, and getting good sleep is key to being able to manage stress, and allow your body time to heal itself from the effects of stress each day.

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As with all things, getting good at stress management takes time and practice, but the sooner you get started, the happier you'll be… your body will thank you for it too!

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