

Slowing down to smell the roses

June 2014 Newsletter



Do you often catch yourself rushing or even holding your breath as you go through everyday tasks? Try this short quiz to see if you might be adding to your stress by racing through life:

- 1) Do you check the time often during the day?
- 2) When people take too long to get to the point, do you feel like interrupting and hurrying them along?
- 3) Are you often the first person to finish at mealtimes?
- 4) When walking along a street, do you feel stuck if you're behind slower walkers?
- 5) Do you become irritable if you have to wait in line?
- 6) Do you leave restaurants or shops if there's even a short wait?
- 7) If you're caught in slow-moving traffic, do you get more annoyed than other drivers?

If you answered "yes" to 5 or more questions, it may be time to put your foot on the brake and s-l-o-w d-o-w-n.

Let go of hurry and worry

Spending your life in a rush isn't good for you. It adds stress, can increase blood pressure and decreases your day-to-day enjoyment. It can lower your immune system so you're more vulnerable to illness. It can even impact your ability to focus on your tasks and do a good job.

So what are some ways to slow down and de-stress? Here are some easy tips:¹

- 1) **Visit Mother Nature.** Spend just 30 minutes each day in green surroundings. Being outdoors increases your intake of sunlight which can boost your immune system and help you sleep better. Relaxing in a natural setting for even a few minutes can lower anxiety.

- 2) **Listen to soothing sounds.** Easy listening music, relaxation recordings or sounds of nature can all lower stress.
- 3) **Do relaxation exercises.** See the article in this month's newsletter that has a relaxation script for you to use. Consider learning to meditate or do yoga.
- 4) **Spend time with friends.** Being with people keeps your mind off anxious thoughts and lifts your mood.
- 5) **Help others.** Even small acts of kindness — like helping an older adult or making a donation to charity — can make you feel happier.
- 6) **Accept what you can't change.** Try not to dwell on the past or obsess about things you can't change. Instead, focus on how you can create a better present and future.
- 7) **Act happier.** The act of smiling can make you happier. Even if you don't feel like it, put a smile on your face and you'll feel cheerier. Others will usually smile back at you, too. After a while, you actually do feel happier!
- 8) **Use lavender.** Many people find the smell of lavender soothing. Used in the bedroom, it can help you get a good night's sleep.
- 9) **Hit the gym.** Exercise promotes the production of endorphins, which, in turn, make you feel better about yourself and more relaxed.
- 10) **Give thanks.** Gratitude increases your well-being. And it helps you enjoy all the good things you already have.

¹www.sciencedaily.com