

Simple Ways to Start Reducing Stress:

- **Get enough sleep** – avoid taking work or anything stressful into the bedroom and find time to unwind before you sleep. If sleeping is an issue, reduce your caffeine intake, especially during the afternoon and evening.
- **Reduce the amount you smoke and amount of alcohol you drink.**
- **Take more exercise.** Exercise releases your body's natural feel good chemicals so you feel better and are able to relax easier. Failing this if you tire yourself out a bit then you're more likely to sleep better.

Anything that increases your heart rate or breathing rate will have a benefit so you could start reducing stress today simply by going for a brisk 10-15 minute walk.

- **Talk to someone** about the things that are getting on top of you – often just the act of putting our stresses into words can start to break them down. The person you talk to may also have some ideas and suggestions that will help you to manage your stress levels.
- **Learn to relax** – find a way to relax that works for you. This could be yoga, tai chi, meditation, listening to relaxing music or a hypnosis track.
- **Breathing technique:** practice doing this breathing technique to reduce stress and feel calmer:
 - Close your eyes and become aware of your breathing
 - When you're ready breathe in for a count of seven and then breathe out for a count of eleven
 - Repeat at least three times, ensuring you count in for seven and out for eleven (so the out breath is longer than the in breath)
 - Notice how you now feel calmer than you did before
- **Read 'Don't Sweat the Small Stuff...and it's all small stuff'** by Richard Carlson and then consider:
 - Ask yourself: 'Will this matter a year from now?'
 - When you die your 'in-box' won't be empty
 - Many of the things you are thinking of as big stuff are really just small stuff that you're turning into big stuff
 - Decide consciously which battles are worth fighting and which are better left alone

Have another suggestion of how to reduce stress? E-mail it to dan@elymindcoaching.co.uk and it may be included in the next update of this list.