

An Easy 15 Minute Evening Routine for Stress Relief

The day's almost over, but you've still got a lot of stress lingering. If that continues, you'll probably keep "rolling" the stress from one day to the next, building up a toxic snowball of stress and negative emotions.

Instead, if you can "dump out" all your stress at the end of each day, you can start the next day fresh and ready to take on the day, feeling good rather than down.

This easy 15 minute evening routine can really help.

Get Out a Sheet of Paper or Journal and Vent

Start by spending 3 to 5 minutes just venting. Write out anything that happened today that stressed you out, anything that annoyed you, anything that still has you angry or stressed out. Vent at people in your life, lay blame, etc. Be irresponsible. Just lash out, on paper.

Basically, get everything that's bottled up inside out of your system. Then take a deep breath and bring yourself back to a more centered place. Often just taking these few minutes to vent will make it much easier to come back to a calmer place.

Write Out and Celebrate Your Accomplishment for the Day

Have you ever heard the saying: "Whatever you focus on, expands"?

Basically, if you focus on the negative things in your life, you'll probably end up attracting more negative things into your life. But if you focus on life's victories, the positive things in your life, you'll start to attract more and more of those things into your life.

This exercise will help you focus on and really appreciate the things that went *right* in the day rather than the things that went *wrong*.

Spend 3 to 5 minutes writing out things that went *right* today. Things you did well, even if they were just minor accomplishments.

You went to the gym. You finished the report. You talked to your boss about something you've been meaning to talk about for a while. You helped your son with his homework. You helped an old lady across the street. It doesn't matter how big or small, just write it down.

Then, do a mini-celebration. It can be as simple as doing a 10 second mini-victory dance. Smile! You won!

It may seem silly, but celebrating your successes, no matter how small, can create a snowball of success.

Plan Your Next Day and Week

A lot of stress actually comes from not knowing what's ahead. For example, if you have a big project due in a week and you have no idea how you're going to accomplish it, that's going to be stressful. If there's a hard conversation you need to have with a co-worker and you have no idea when you'll do it, that's going to be stressful.

But *having a plan* can really help relieve that stress. Even if your plan is "not today," just knowing that you have a plan to actually get something done rather than have to do it "sometime" will give your brain a lot of relief.

Write your rough plan for the week, including the important tasks that need to be accomplished this week. Then plan your next day in detail, down to the task or hour.

If you follow this simple routine, that really takes about 15 minutes every night, you'll find your stress level dropping down very, very quickly. You'll get to vent out all your held-in emotions, celebrate your accomplishments and build a sense of achievement and finally look ahead and remove whatever stress comes from not knowing exactly what to do in the future.