

Ways to Prevent and Alleviate Stress

- ❖ **Listen to music** that nourishes you.
 - ❖ **Find beauty.** A painting, a walk in nature, a sunset or sunrise, a flower.
 - ❖ **Sleep.** Get enough!
 - ❖ **Take breaks & rests:** some kind of mini vacation between or via different activities.
 - ❖ **Feed your soul** by making sure that you do things you love. It could be a hobby, giving to others, being creative, spending time with a friend...
 - ❖ **Laugh... Have fun... Smile...**
-
- ❖ **Protect yourself.** Maybe you need to set boundaries and say 'no' more often. When you get requests, practice saying, "Let me think about it."
 - ❖ **Schedule time for yourself.** Even if this is only brief, insist on it daily.
 - ❖ **Obligations.** Think carefully before taking on new ones.
 - ❖ **Practice gratitude.** A great reminder, even if times are tough, of all you have.
 - ❖ **Value small steps.**
 - ❖ **Reduce clutter.** Create ordered external space which produces internal freedom and pleasure.
 - ❖ **Establish routines.** They reduce uncertainty and anxiety.
 - ❖ **Notice tension** in your body and do what you can to release it.
 - ❖ **Exercise:** walking, yoga, Tai Chi.
 - ❖ **Breathing techniques** or simply consciously follow your breath in and out for a few minutes, or take a few deep breaths.
 - ❖ **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)** is a physical technique for relaxing your body when muscles are tense. The idea behind PMR is that you tense up a group of muscles so that they are as tightly contracted as possible. Hold them in a state of extreme tension for a few seconds. Then relax the muscles to their previous state. Finally you consciously relax them again as much as you can.
 - Starting with your face, work your way down to your feet, tense each muscle group in turn for a count of five then slowly relax for a count of 30.
 - Repeat this at least once in each area before moving on to the next.

- ❖ **Guided imagery** is a gentle but powerful technique that focuses and directs the imagination. It can be used as a relaxation technique and healing tool, where the mind's power is being harnessed to influence, calm, and often heal the body. It's also a tool that's used to foster peak performance.
 - Close your eyes and place yourself in the most peaceful, relaxing place you can imagine.
 - Use music or a guided experience, if possible, which can help you relax as you mentally create the sights, sounds, and sensations of your personal oasis. There are many resources (CD's, DVD's). You'll find some at your library. To buy them check out www.healthjourneys.com and www.amazon.com
- ❖ **Meditation.** There are many ways to define and describe this ancient and modern tool for being aware, for paying attention on purpose without judging.
- ❖ **Massage.**
- ❖ **Talk to a friend.**
- ❖ **Journaling** – Let yourself write about what's going on inside you. Research has shown that writing down thoughts and feelings can have beneficial, health-giving effects.
- ❖ **Eat well & thoughtfully.** Do the best that you can to make the healthiest food choices for you. After a meal, take a few minutes to rest and digest. Those few minutes of attention and kindness towards yourself can last a long time.
- ❖ **Ask for help** from your partner, family or friends.
- ❖ **Be kind to yourself!**

Andrea Shaw, PhD, MCC
Executive, Health & Life Coach
919-933-2311
www.andreashawcoaching.com