

Sleep:

	If you are a poor sleeper, start by focusing on better quality and sleep efficiency rather than length
	Most of the important sleep happens in the first five hours; you get diminishing returns after that
	No electronics within 1 hour of bedtime because of the light it emits can disrupt your sleep cycle
	Structured days reduces stress for people under 65
	Dedicating a space for work and a space for rest and not merging the two spots
	Don't lie awake in bed for longer than 15 min. Get up and do something soothing without direct light, then try again later.
	Exercise regularly but not within 3 hours of bedtime
	Keep temps cool in bedroom
	Keep pets outside the bedroom – they wake you
	Get 30 min or more of light as soon as you wake up in the morning to make sure your melatonin levels plunge
	Sugary coffee/drinks should be replaced with other sources of dopamine: self-care, praise, pleasant activities. Anticipation of pleasure leads to greater dopamine release than pleasant memories. Planning a trip vs. remembering a trip.

Personal Stress Reduction Strategies

Mindset:

	Social interaction before a high stress event helps coping with that stress because you connect with others. Ex. Walking or eating lunch with work friend.
	Recognizing what we can change and what we must accept early on is important because you will let go of what is beyond your control much earlier and solve problems more productively ☞ <i>What part of your life are you in charge of?</i>
	Attending to and voicing emotions helps us change a fight or flight response. Ex. Journaling, talking about it with loved ones, making a worry list.
	Compartmentalize – make a time and place for everything. Set appointments with yourself to focus your thinking on one thing at a time to avoid being overwhelmed and unfocused. ☞ <i>Write down something that is weighing you down. Now set a time to give it your attention so you can move past it.</i>
	If you can't reduce stressors, seek separation between them. Ex. Take breaks to reset yourself, get some peace, meditate, do something enjoyable.
	Develop an antidote thought for small breaks of self-compassion. Here's a favorite quote: <i>"If you are depressed you are living in the past. If you are anxious you are living in the future. If you are at peace you are living in the present."</i> — Lao Tzu
	Gratitude – focusing on the positive and being grateful is helpful in stress reduction because the more you use a neural pathway, the easier it becomes. It becomes your brain's habit to look for the positive, rather than the negative. <i>Martha Washington said, "...the greater part of our misery or unhappiness is determined not by our circumstance but by our disposition."</i>
	Breathing exercises – longer exhales, count downbeats of pulse and slow rhythm
	Regular exercise: 3x/week calms the brain
	Don't try to relax until after movement – get heartrate and blood pressure up first
	Switch from external control to internal control; if you can't control THAT, control YOUR REACTION. Three steps: Awareness Action Acceptance "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Serenity prayer (adapted)