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If you are Stressed here is Six Tricks to Restore Calm

1. ENJOY THE LITTLE MOMENTS

When's the last time you actually stopped what you were doing and looked at a sunset...or looked up, period? We thought so. But there's good reason to revel in what's around you. Focus on [pleasurable experiences](#) and you'll activate happiness-related neurons, which could make future good times feel more intense. "Simply put, when neurons fire together, they wire together," says author Daniel Siegel, M.D.

How to do it Experience joy with all your senses—inhal the smells; feel the air on your skin. "The more fully you feel something, the deeper the neural traces that are left behind in the brain," says author Rick Hanson, Ph.D. "That solidifies your memory of the moment," Over time, you'll have an easier time handling random stressors. (Rude driver? No prob!)

2. HANG WITH UPBEAT PEOPLE

Emotions are contagious. "You can catch a mood, just like a cold," says Marco Iacoboni, M.D., author of *Mirroring People: The Science of Empathy and How We Connect With Others*. When you watch a person doing something, the mirror neurons in your brain are activated, even if you're not doing anything yourself. So if you see someone smile, your mirror neurons for smiling fire up, whether or not you're in a [good mood](#). "Spend time with happy people and you'll eventually feel happier yourself," Dr. Iacoboni says.

3. SMILE, EVEN IF IT'S HARD

The physical act of [smiling can lift your mood](#), a phenomenon known as the facial feedback hypothesis. Similarly, researchers at the University of Wisconsin in Madison studied people before and after they'd gotten Botox, which blocks frowning. Post-'tox, subjects took longer to understand sad or angry sentences. Impairing frowning may disrupt the brain-body feedback loop, dampening negative emotions.

4. GET YOUR KARAOKE ON

There's evidence that a primitive sensory organ in the inner ear, the sacculus, might react to music, triggering a response in the hypothalamus that creates a pleasurable buzz. "Consider singing your worries out loud in a lilting voice," says Reid Wilson, Ph.D., author of *Don't Panic: Taking Control of Anxiety Attacks*. (Try something like "Bills, bills, bills—they suck!" to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat.") "Singing about worries makes them seem a bit absurd and helps put them in perspective."

5. WORK IT OUT

"Exercise may buffer the brain from stressful situations," says John Ratey, M.D., author of *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*. There's some evidence that [working up a sweat](#) promotes

the growth of new neurons that are less reactive to stress.

6. PUT A WARM, FUZZY MEMORY ON REPEAT

Replay a scene—cooking with your grandma—that evokes safety as you place your hand on your heart or cheek. “You’ll activate neural networks associated with feeling cared for, which can help you feel safer,” says neuropsychologist Rick Hanson, Ph.D. Another tip: Imagine yourself as a tree with a wide trunk and deep roots; visualize any upsetting things blowing around you like the wind. Hanson says, “They might rattle the leaves, but they can’t hurt the tree.” Or you.

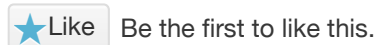
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