

experience causes the release of hormones and neurotransmitters that counteract the effects of stress. And, a pleasurable experience creates more positive benefits than a stressful experience causes harm. So, instead of reducing stress, we should be deliberately creating pleasure and enjoyment in our lives.

It's likely that a major part of the reason anxiety-related disorders are epidemic in our society is because we are just too busy. We are constantly on the go, and take very little time for pleasure and recreation. Making sure we *plan* time to do enjoyable things is very important to our emotional and physical health.

Many people feel they are too busy for this. Well, the truth is, that the busier you are, the more important it is for you to make time for rest and relaxation. If a woodcutter doesn't take time to sharpen his saw or his axe, he will find himself working harder and harder while becoming less and less productive. Rest and relaxation is "saw-sharpening" time—it makes you more productive the rest of the time. If you are busy, you can't afford to *not* take time for rest and relaxation.

Watching TV doesn't count. Generally speaking, TV is designed to be stimulating, not relaxing. Instead, look for activities that feel pleasurable to the body, such as a warm bath, a soak in a hot tub, a massage, listening to relaxing music or taking a walk in the park. Find things that make you laugh and awaken a child-like delight in life. Slow down when you eat and really enjoy the flavor of the food. Remember that anything that brings a sensation of bodily pleasure counteracts the effects of stress and reduces anxiety.

Strategy #3: Get a Good Night's Sleep

One sure-fire way to increase anxiety is to get short-changed on sleep. Unfortunately, a large percentage of Americans have trouble sleeping or simply do not get enough sleep.

If you have trouble getting to sleep there are several remedies you can try. What works for you will depend on the specific problems inhibiting your sleep. Sometimes, just taking something that helps relax the nervous system shortly before bedtime is enough. **Herbal Sleep** formula may be helpful here. Take 3-6 capsules about one hour before bedtime to help you relax. If you have a lot of muscle tension, add 1-2 capsules of **Kava Kava**.

Melatonin Extra can be helpful for resetting your biological clock when crossing time zones due to travel or when situations have disrupted your normal sleep pattern. Melatonin is a hormone produced by the pineal gland to regulate sleep patterns.

If sleep problems are accompanied by depression and carbohydrate cravings, you may be low in serotonin. Serotonin is the building block for melatonin in the brain. 5-HTP is a precursor to serotonin and helps increase serotonin levels in the brain. Try taking **5-HTP Power** about one hour before bedtime. Since the pineal gland converts serotonin to melatonin when it's dark, simply darkening the room helps improve sleep patterns. Light pollution (excess light at night) is a common cause of sleep disturbances. (Watching TV or playing on the computer doesn't help you relax and get to sleep because you are staring at a source of light, which inhibits melatonin production. Try reading with a reading lamp or listening to music in a darkened room instead.)

If you have trouble staying asleep or have disturbed sleep with restless dreams, this can be a sign of adrenal fatigue or blood sugar problems. Nervous Fatigue Formula or Adrenal Support (*mentioned under Strategy #1: Adaptagens*) can help. Also try eating a snack containing some fat and protein about one hour before bedtime. Good choices would be a few spoonfuls of cottage cheese or nut butter, nuts or a spoonful of coconut oil.

If you're a coffee and/or sugar addict, then it's time to start breaking these addictions. Replace coffee with **Herbal Beverage** or other natural beverages and replace sugar with complex carbohydrates such as whole grains. **Xylitol** is a natural alternative to refined sugar that can also help reduce sugar cravings and balance blood sugar levels.

Strategy #4: Relax Tense Muscles

People who suffer from anxiety usually have a lot of tension in their muscles. Anything that helps to stretch muscles and get them to relax will reduce feelings of stress and anxiety. Good choices include stretching exercises, yoga, tai chi or massage therapy.

You can also use supplements to help muscles relax. Lobelia and kava kava are great antispasmodic herbs that can relax muscles and reduce anxiety. For long-term use, kava kava is the best choice. It can help you stay relaxed, improve your mood, but keep your

Distress Remedy to the Rescue

Distress Remedy is a blend of flower essences that are used to treat emotional shock and trauma. Based on the famous Bach Rescue Remedy, it contains the same five flower essences: rock rose (which eases feelings of terror and panic), impatiens (for impatient attitude and irritation), star of Bethlehem (helps recovery from shock and trauma), cherry plum (eases irrational thoughts and helps one get control of one's thinking) and clematis (for clarity, creativity and alertness in the present moment).

Distress Remedy goes even further, adding flower essences of comfrey, arnica, calendula, leopard's bane, traveler's joy and nightshade, which help heal both physical and emotional trauma. Use it anytime you or someone else is emotionally distressed or physically injured, to reduce pain, inflammation, shock, anxiety or fear, and promote faster healing.

Additional Help and Information

If you would like more information about natural ways to deal with anxiety, talk to the person who gave you this newsletter. They have additional handouts and resource materials to help you. You can also consult some of the following sources for more information:

Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth>

The New Epidemic: Anxiety, Panic & Depression by Elizabeth Bohorquez

An Overview of Anxiety Disorders by Jack D Maser

Natural Relief for Anxiety by Edmund J. Bourne

Coping With Anxiety by Edmund Bourne