

Address your stress

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This summer has been a stressful one. My full-time job always gets busier this time of year because of a reduction of my team members' hours and an increase in their vacations. An added stressor this year is that a program we work with daily has made significant "improvements" that have caused hours of extra work and frustration as we adapt our systems. And we have brought on new projects, which is simultaneously exciting and stressful. I love my job, but even more so than usual this year, I am counting down until vacation. (When this is published, I'll be down to 21 days, 2 hours.)

But I can't speed up time, and I don't want to spend three more weeks totally stressed out to the detriment of my family and my team. I need to address my stress regularly, so I have actually created a list of what helps me feel better.

- Write a list to [release my brain](#)! A list might feel counter-intuitive because it reminds me of everything I still have to do, but I find that getting it out on paper makes me feel so much better.
- Listen to music, sing, and/or dance. I LOVE music and I can tell when I'm out of whack that it's time to belt some tunes or have a dance party with my kids. I even have a 30-minute mix called "Singing is the cure" - and listening to it while knocking things off my list works every time.
- Watch something that makes me laugh. Thank goodness for YouTube! And Finding Dory!
- [Celebrate what's working](#). When I'm stressed, I tend to feel as if I'm failing as a mom, a wife, an employee, a boss, a speaker, a daughter, a sister... you get the idea. Taking a moment to identify what's going well helps counteract the feelings of failure.
- Connect with a friend. When I'm super-busy, I tend to draw inward, but that's really when I need to reach out. Even a 5-minute conversation can help heal my soul.
- Clear clutter. Gretchen Rubin says, "Outer order, inner calm." I agree with her. When life is just too much, I organize my surroundings and bask in the joy of a clean surface.
- Commit a random act of kindness. This helps me remember it's not all about me. Taking the time to do something nice for someone "just because" is an instant mood-lifter.
- Paint my toenails. It's like a 5-minute makeover. And seeing a fresh coat of paint on my toes gives me a lift throughout the day.
- Do some lettering. I've picked up this hobby this year. It's fun and lets me be creative. Also, when I'm focused on writing, I can't focus on all the other stuff driving me bananas.
- [Look up](#). I always feel better when I look up at the sky, regardless of the weather. It reminds me of just how lucky I am to be on the planet, and it also reminds me of how infinitesimally small my problems are in relation to the universe.

Of course, the biggest way to address your stress is to identify the source and take steps to alleviate those challenges. But if you know why you're stressed, and you're doing what you can to resolve those issues, you also need to take time to address the symptoms.

What's on your stress relief list? If you don't have one, start working on one today!