

7 Stress-Relieving Tips for High-Achieving Women

“Anxiety is a knot of both emotions and physiology,” says Dr. Marcelle Pick, OB-GYN, N.P., and for many women, especially those high-achieving “all together” ones, this generalized feeling of anxiety is so commonplace, they often don’t even recognize its existence.

While it is natural to feel a racing pulse or a quickening of breath in moments of danger or fear, it is not normal to experience these symptoms of anxiousness and upset the majority of the time. Writes Dr. Pick, “Too many of us never get to relax: our minds are perpetually on high alert with the accompanying physical response.”

Unfortunately, the physical danger to a woman whose body is on constant “high alert” can be extensive and the damage cumulative. Dr. Pick warns women who experience chronic irrational fears or dread, chest pain, muscle tension/headaches, heart palpitations, insomnia, gastrointestinal distress, tearfulness, depression and/or overall jumpiness to seek out medical care for treatment, which, according to Pick, must be dealt with from a variety of sides, both physical and emotional.

It is clear that our frenetic lifestyles contribute to this growing anxiety-related health problem.

Even those few who do recognize the need for regular scheduled rest may approach it from a clearly capitalistic ideal. Author Lauren Winner writes in her book *Mudhouse Sabbath* about what she has observed is the capitalistic society’s justification for resting one day a week: to be conversely fit for more productivity during the other six days. Say what?

Those women whose sole motivation in resting is to jumpstart

the hamster wheel with increased gusto have missed the point entirely. Further, Winner points out that even though this precept may prove true (after resting, one does have renewed physical energy), this whole “achievement oriented” concept of resting is at odds with the overarching principle of taking a purposeful, regular retreat from the daily grind, which is more of an inner renewal than anything else and which naturally lends itself to healthy introspection and more reasonable life perspectives.

From every angle, rest is truly curative if it is practiced with regularity and the proper end goal in mind.

Practical Suggestions for Reducing Symptoms of Anxiety

- 1. Understand the link between hormones, PMS, perimenopause, and menopause.** Achieve hormonal balance by considering natural progesterone or bio-identical HRT with the help of a physician.
- 2. Practice good nutrition.** Eat whole foods, and stay clear of caffeine, sugar and simple carbohydrates. “White foods” are a woman’s enemy.
- 3. Be physically active.** Touted as the single best anxiety medication, women should engage in moderate daily exercise.
- 4. Get enough sleep.** Set up a nightly routine for bedtime, and stick to it. Women in general require 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night for better brain health.
- 5. Go outside for sun exposure.** Take 15 minutes a day (without sunscreen) to encourage the production of vitamin D that helps stave off mood disorders, such as seasonal affective disorder.
- 6. Take an emotional inventory.** Revisit current familial, work and volunteer responsibilities, and then make adjustments as warranted.
- 7. Schedule in regular time for rest.** Then give these slotted

time segments the priority they deserve.

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