

TIPS FOR A STRESS FREE SUMMER

“Summertime and the livin’ is easy, fish are jumpin’ and the cotton is high...” or so the old song goes. How are you livin’ this summer? Relaxed? or Stressed?

Are you suffering from “V.D.D.” or “Vacation Deficit Disorder?”

I recently read an article by Dr. Harold Rubenstein, “The Vacation Doctor.” He believes doctors should prescribe “vacations” instead of medicines, hospitalization and surgery. He believes 70% of the health care problems facing Americans today are stress related. People in countries that have longer life spans, such as in Europe and Japan, vacation more than Americans. Time off is “medicine” that can have a major positive impact on your health.

The first thing most American families give up is their vacation. The last thing a European gives up is his vacation! We spend our vacations hopping from one spot to another causing more stress. It takes us two to three days to wind down and forget our problems when we go on vacation.

Many people these days are too wrapped up in their work to take off at all. Some people see taking a vacation as a lack of commitment to their jobs. There’s almost a contest to prove you have less of a life than the next person. There’s an assumption in companies that the best worker is the one who sacrifices everything for the job.

Even though you may get on well with your relatives, don’t count time spent with family as a vacation. You don’t need to stay with them and hear about their problems while you are trying to resolve your own. You need to escape on your own for a while. The best vacations are those where we go to a comfortable setting and stay a week or two.

Research has shown extra hours on the job can be unproductive. When you’re rested and refreshed, your productivity will rise. Having a full life beyond the office improves your performance on the job. Set a goal this summer to spend time with your family and friends but also set time aside especially for YOU!

Here’s some stress-reducing information you can use in different areas of your life to help you have a summer where the livin’ is easy and enjoyable.

OFFICE PLANNING

What is the day before vacation like for you? Hectic? Frustrating? Overwhelming?
When you leave work on that last day before vacation, how do you feel? Excited?
Tired? Happy!!!

Most people love to clear off their desks before they leave on vacation (and I don't mean throwing everything in a drawer.) They make decisions that they've been putting off, bills get mailed, correspondence gets written, phone calls and emails handled to resolve work that may have gone unfinished for weeks. Most people like to get as much done as possible so they can come back to a fresh start.

When you are organized all the time, everyday is like the day before vacation. Everyday you are making those decisions, delegating projects, handling incoming phone messages and emails as soon as you can. Imagine that – when vacation comes you don't need to run around desperately because you are doing what you should be doing everyday. Remember clutter is postponed decisions! Make those decisions each and every day and you won't have piles to handle the day before vacation.

VACATION TRAVEL PLANNING

For planning that vacation, sometimes it's fun to be spontaneous, but to avoid stress while traveling, book early. Go to www.Bestfares.com for lots of travel information.

Do you have your toiletries packed in a small bag ready to go whenever you need them? That's just one little time saving tip when you are getting ready to travel. Put duplicates of all your cosmetics, make up, or toiletries in your travel case and keep it handy. Just grab it and go.

Here's an informative web site to check out when you are getting ready for your next vacation. www.easygoing.com has a checklist you can easily print for use when you travel. There's even a place to write down your flight numbers, arrival and departure times and other information you might need in a hurry.

If you are one of those people who likes to try the latest gizmo or gadget you think will help make your traveling easier, then here's a web site that will help you find what you need, www.travelgizmos.com.

We all hate to see our vacation come to an end, but don't forget about unpacking that suitcase as soon as you get home, no matter how tired you are. Nothing can be more frustrating than an unpacked suitcase of dirty laundry left lying around.

ROAD TRIP PLANNING

If you are planning a road trip check www.GasPriceWatch.com and www.GasBuddy.com. Each site posts prices for thousands of gas stations, so you can find the best deal in your neighborhood, or wherever you're headed.

Your car's been checked and you are ready to leave on vacation! But wait, don't forget the most important thing – get some sleep! Falling asleep at the wheel is one of the leading causes of fatal single-car accidents, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. If all the last-minute planning has worn you out, don't go too far on your first day and take 10-minute breaks every two hours. Check out www.roadtripamerica.com for other information on car trips.

SUMMER VOLUNTEERING

If you traded troubles with another person, you'd probably want your own back very quickly. Helping others who are less fortunate can immediately change the amount of stress you feel you have in your own life. Whether it's volunteering at the food bank, teaching others to read, or helping at the library, volunteering makes you feel better about yourself and others. This is a great habit to start now in the summer and continue throughout the year. When you volunteer, you get back so much more than you give.

TIME FOR YOURSELF

Realize that you do need time for yourself. Set an alarm if you have to, but take time each day to consciously stop everything and do something for yourself. You will be amazed at what you can accomplish in 10, 15 or 30 minutes each day, even if it's just quietly sitting by yourself to reflect on the day.

PET CARE

People who own pets have lower blood pressure, live longer and are more relaxed. If spending time with your pet is important to you, summertime can be even more enjoyable when you decide to take your pet along on vacation. This can be an entertaining or frustrating experience depending on how much planning you do. Here's a website to help you when you are scheduling a trip with your cat or dog. www.petsonthego.com

The site offers information to help you understand whether or not your pet is suited to travel. Some pets are just better when they can stay in their familiar surroundings even though you might think it would be fun to take them with you. You will also find information on discounted room rates at hotels that take pets. Other subjects include pet etiquette, pet emergencies and even toys for the traveling pet.

RAINY DAY IDEA

Don't get stressed out if you have to spend time in your home on a rainy weekend. Most of us have so much to do in our lives that we never know where to start or what to do next. When we can't be outside because of the weather, use this as an opportunity to work on the giant box of family photos that you never seem to get to.

First realize this project will probably take longer than one weekend. The ideal setting is to have one place where you can work on this project without having to clean up each day. Is there a location where you can set up a card table or use your dining room table (one of the most unused rooms in the home?) This is a great way to get the whole family involved. Reminiscing about old photos can really add to the enjoyment of the project.

As with any organizing project, set aside a specific amount of time each day to work on it. Start with the photos you've just received and categorize by what makes sense to you -- date, subject, person or yearly event. Once you get the photos categorized, a good short term solution is to place them in the photo boxes you can purchase at any craft store. As you schedule time later, you can easily turn the photos into a scrapbooking project as a keepsake. Keep some envelopes handy to mail those duplicate photos off to other relatives. Everyone loves to receive unexpected photos in the mail.

Take reasonable steps to relieve stress in your life this summer. But whatever you do, don't stress about it. Develop your plan for a R.E.S.T.E.D. summer which allows for:

R	Relationships	maintain special relationships with family and friends.
E	Exercise	stay healthy with a daily exercise program
S	Simplify	think about reducing the amount of stuff in your life
T	Time Alone	find quiet time to think clearly
E	Eliminate	what you don't enjoy doing
D	Diet	eat balanced, nutritious meals to stay healthy

Have a simply super summer sippin' lemonade and enjoying life!

Further information on many of the ideas mentioned here can be obtained by attending a "SIMPLY ORGANIZED" seminar featuring the GO (Get Organized) System. If you are interested in getting organized and staying organized, this three hour seminar has a different approach and its many realistic, useful and practical suggestions will help you change your life.

I'd be happy to answer any organizing questions. Please send them to:

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