

# coping with stress



## Stress and Stressors

Stress is something that is part of normal life, in that it is experienced by everyone from time-to-time. However, some people suffer from stress which is so frequent or so severe that it can seriously impact on their quality of life. Stress can come from a huge range of sources (*stressors*), such as:

- ◇ Relationships with others
- ◇ Work-related issues
- ◇ Study demands
- ◇ Coping with illness
- ◇ Life changes, such as marriage, retirement, divorce
- ◇ Day-to-day activities and tasks
- ◇ Positive events, such as organising holidays or parties
- ◇ Juggling many roles or tasks at the same time



Some people are aware of what tends to trigger their stress, and this increases their ability to either prevent stress or to handle it more effectively. Many others are less able to deal with stress, and identifying stressors is a key step in this. If you often experience stress, take some time to consider what tends to set it off for you.

## Symptoms of Stress

Some people do not even notice that they are stressed until symptoms begin to occur, including:

- ◇ Irritability or moodiness
- ◇ Interrupted sleep
- ◇ Worrying or feeling of anxiety
- ◇ Back and neck pain
- ◇ Frequent headaches, minor to migraine
- ◇ Upset stomach
- ◇ Increased blood pressure
- ◇ Changes in appetite
- ◇ Rashes or skin breakouts
- ◇ Chest pains
- ◇ Making existing physical problems worse
- ◇ More susceptible to cold/flu and slower recovery

These symptoms reduce quality of life, and people suffering from stress may notice that work performance or relationships suffer more as a result. You may be able to use some the strategies listed here, or you may find it useful to consult a professional for more help.

## Stress Management Tips

- 1) **Identify your stressors**, and see if there are some things within your control to manage better. Some things will be beyond your control, for example if you work a job that is based on working towards deadlines then you can't change this without changing jobs. But perhaps you can control some aspects, such as scheduling to have at least a short lunch break each day, or to go to bed earlier so that you have more energy to cope with the daytime.
- 2) Build **regular exercise** into your life - as well as being part of a healthy, balanced lifestyle and giving you more energy, many people find that working out at the gym or playing sport helps them to unwind.
- 3) Make sure that you **eat and sleep well**.
- 4) **Take time out** for family, friends and recreational activities. Most of us know that this is important but we do not all do it. If you find it hard to make time for this, perhaps you need to take deliberate steps to have time out, such as set aside one evening a week where you meet up with friends or enjoy a hobby, or set aside one day of the weekend for relaxing at home.
- 5) **Problem-solving techniques** can be a useful way of clarifying the problem, brainstorming possible solutions, and then choosing one to put into action after listing the pros and cons of each option. See the handout *Problem Solving* for more details about this.
- 6) **Learn calming techniques** such as controlled breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, to train your mind and body to become more relaxed. These techniques require practice but can be helpful with regular use. See handouts *Calming Technique* and *Progressive Muscle Relaxation*.
- 7) You may wish to speak to a professional about **assertiveness training and communication skills** which can help you to deal with challenging situations more effectively, thereby reducing stress. See the handout *Assertive Communication*.
- 8) Last but definitely not least, consider whether there is **negative thinking** which is contributing to your stress. Negative thinking can make us worry more than is necessary, increasing stress, and generally does not motivate us to take positive actions. See the handouts *Thinking & Feeling*, *Analysing Your Thinking* and *Changing Your Thinking*.



## Problem Solving

Problem-solving can help to manage stress. Much of the time our stress is due to us dwelling on why problems have occurred, and what the problem means for us. This is natural, but we also need to focus on solutions as well.

There are a number of ways to problem solve. Find a process that works for you. Try the **'SOLVE'** solve method below in the meantime.

1. **S**elect a problem:
2. Identify your **O**ptions for solving this problem, and the **L**ikely outcome of each:
3. Select the **V**ery best option available, and take action
4. **E**valuate the effectiveness of your solution, and make changes if needed:

- 
1. **Select a problem:** I feel the urge to drink, but I want to cut back on my drinking

2. <b>O</b> ption for solving this problem...	<b>L</b> ikely outcome of this...
Go for a run	Temporary distraction, get endorphin high, feel proud for doing it
Drink a little	Temporary pleasure, I might just stop there - though I usually don't, and end up drinking more than I should
Drunk a lot	temporary pleasure, hangover, regret
Get rid of alcohol	irritation at wasting the alcohol/money, less temptation

3. **Select the V**ery best option and take action = go for run
4. **E**valuate the effectiveness of your solution, and make changes if needed = The run took my mind off my cravings and I felt less stressed. When I got home though, I got triggered as there was wine in the fridge. I'd better get rid of it.

## Problem Solving

1. Select a problem =

2. <u>O</u> ption for solving this problem...	<u>L</u> ikely outcome of this...

3. Select the Very best option and take action =

4. Evaluate the effectiveness of your solution, and make changes if needed =



# sleep hygiene

## What is Sleep Hygiene?

'Sleep hygiene' is the term used to describe good sleep habits. Considerable research has gone into developing a set of guidelines and tips which are designed to enhance good sleeping, and there is much evidence to suggest that these strategies can provide long-term solutions to sleep difficulties.

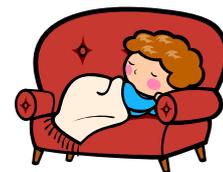
There are many medications which are used to treat insomnia, but these tend to be only effective in the short-term. Ongoing use of sleeping pills may lead to dependence and interfere with developing good sleep habits independent of medication, thereby prolonging sleep difficulties. Talk to your health professional about what is right for you, but we recommend good sleep hygiene as an important part of treating insomnia, either with other strategies such as medication or cognitive therapy or alone.

## Sleep Hygiene Tips

- 1) **Get regular.** One of the best ways to train your body to sleep well is to go to bed and get up at more or less the same time every day, even on weekends and days off! This regular rhythm will make you feel better and will give your body something to work from.
- 2) **Sleep when sleepy.** Only try to sleep when you actually feel tired or sleepy, rather than spending too much time awake in bed.
- 3) **Get up & try again.** If you haven't been able to get to sleep after about 20 minutes or more, get up and do something calming or boring until you feel sleepy, then return to bed and try again. Sit quietly on the couch with the lights off (bright light will tell your brain that it is time to wake up), or read something boring like the phone book. Avoid doing anything that is too stimulating or interesting, as this will wake you up even more.
- 4) **Avoid caffeine & nicotine.** It is best to avoid consuming any caffeine (in coffee, tea, cola drinks, chocolate, and some medications) or nicotine (cigarettes) for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. These substances act as stimulants and interfere with the ability to fall asleep.
- 5) **Avoid alcohol.** It is also best to avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. Many people believe that alcohol is relaxing and helps them to get to sleep at first, but it actually interrupts the quality of sleep.
- 6) **Bed is for sleeping.** Try not to use your bed for anything other than sleeping and sex, so that your body comes to associate bed with sleep. If you use bed as a place to watch TV, eat, read, work on your laptop, pay bills, and other things, your body will not learn this connection.



- 7) **No naps.** It is best to avoid taking naps during the day, to make sure that you are tired at bedtime. If you can't make it through the day without a nap, make sure it is for less than an hour and before 3pm.
- 8) **Sleep rituals.** You can develop your own rituals of things to remind your body that it is time to sleep - some people find it useful to do relaxing stretches or breathing exercises for 15 minutes before bed each night, or sit calmly with a cup of caffeine-free tea.
- 9) **Bathtime.** Having a hot bath 1-2 hours before bedtime can be useful, as it will raise your body temperature, causing you to feel sleepy as your body temperature drops again. Research shows that sleepiness is associated with a drop in body temperature.
- 10) **No clock-watching.** Many people who struggle with sleep tend to watch the clock too much. Frequently checking the clock during the night can wake you up (especially if you turn on the light to read the time) and reinforces negative thoughts such as "Oh no, look how late it is, I'll never get to sleep" or "it's so early, I have only slept for 5 hours, this is terrible."
- 11) **Use a sleep diary.** This worksheet can be a useful way of making sure you have the right facts about your sleep, rather than making assumptions. Because a diary involves watching the clock (see point 10) it is a good idea to only use it for two weeks to get an idea of what is going and then perhaps two months down the track to see how you are progressing.
- 12) **Exercise.** Regular exercise is a good idea to help with good sleep, but try not to do strenuous exercise in the 4 hours before bedtime. Morning walks are a great way to start the day feeling refreshed!
- 13) **Eat right.** A healthy, balanced diet will help you to sleep well, but timing is important. Some people find that a very empty stomach at bedtime is distracting, so it can be useful to have a light snack, but a heavy meal soon before bed can also interrupt sleep. Some people recommend a warm glass of milk, which contains tryptophan, which acts as a natural sleep inducer.
- 14) **The right space.** It is very important that your bed and bedroom are quiet and comfortable for sleeping. A cooler room with enough blankets to stay warm is best, and make sure you have curtains or an eyemask to block out early morning light and earplugs if there is noise outside your room.
- 15) **Keep daytime routine the same.** Even if you have a bad night sleep and are tired it is important that you try to keep your daytime activities the same as you had planned. That is, don't avoid activities because you feel tired. This can reinforce the insomnia.



# Breathing Retraining

Everyone knows that breathing is an essential part of life, but did you know that breathing plays an essential role in anxiety? This information sheet will briefly discuss the role of breathing in anxiety and guide you through a simple breathing retraining technique that uses breathing patterns to help deal with anxiety.

Breathing is a powerful determinant of physical state. When our breathing rate becomes elevated, a number of physiological changes begin to occur. Perhaps you've noticed this yourself when you've had a fright; you might suddenly gasp, feel a little breathless and a little light-headed, as well as feeling some tingling sensations around your body. Believe it or not, the way we breathe is a major factor in producing these and other sensations that are noticeable when we are anxious.

## **Anxious breathing**

You probably already know that we breathe in to obtain oxygen and we breathe out to expel carbon dioxide. The body naturally maintains optimal levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide, and this balance is in part maintained through how fast and how deeply we breathe. When we exercise, for example, we breathe faster and more deeply in order to replace the oxygen being used and expel the extra carbon dioxide produced by metabolic changes.

Anxiety causes an increase in our breathing rate, as part of the physical fight or flight response to a perceived threat. However, when our breathing rate increases without any physical exertion, we breathe out too much carbon dioxide. If the body cannot quickly return carbon dioxide levels to the optimal range, we experience further symptoms such as dizziness, light-headedness, headache, weakness and tingling in the extremities and muscle stiffness.

The normal rate of breathing is 10-14 breaths per minute – what's your breathing rate?

## **Breathing Retraining**

While temporary overbreathing and hyperventilation are not specifically dangerous (it's even used in medical testing!), continued overbreathing can leave you feeling exhausted or "on edge" so that you're more likely to respond to stressful situations with intense anxiety and panic.

Gaining control over your breathing involves both slowing your rate of breathing and changing your breathing style. Use the following steps to be well on your way to developing a better breathing habit.

- 1 Ensure that you are sitting on a comfortable chair or laying on a bed
- 2 Take a breath in for 4 seconds (through the nose if possible)
- 3 Hold the breath for 2 seconds
- 4 Release the breath taking 6 seconds (through the nose if possible), then pause slightly before breathing in again.
- 5 Practise, practise, practise!

## **Breathing tips**

- When you first begin changing your breathing, it may be difficult to slow your breathing down to this rate. You may wish to try using a 3-in, 1-hold, 4-out breathing rate to start off with.
- When you are doing your breathing exercises, make sure that you are using a stomach breathing style rather than a chest breathing style. You can check this by placing one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. The hand on your stomach should rise when you breathe in.
- Try to practise at least once or twice a day at a time when you can relax, relatively free from distraction. This will help to develop a more relaxed breathing habit. The key to progress really is practise, so try to set aside some time each day.

***By using breathing retraining you can slow your breathing down and reduce your general level anxiety. With enough practice, it can even help to better cope with anxiety when you are in an anxious situation.***

# progressive muscle relaxation

One of the body's reactions to fear and anxiety is muscle tension. This can result in feeling "tense", or can lead to muscle aches and pains, as well as leaving some people feeling exhausted. Think about how you respond to anxiety. Do you "tense up" when you're feeling anxious? Muscle relaxation can be particularly helpful in cases where anxiety is especially associated to muscle tension. This information sheet will guide you through a common form of relaxation designed to reduce muscle tension.

## Muscle tension

Muscle tension is commonly associated with stress, anxiety and fear as part of a process that helps our bodies prepare for potentially dangerous situations. Even though some of those situations may not actually be dangerous, our bodies respond in the same way. Sometimes we don't even notice how our muscles become tense, but perhaps you clench your teeth slightly so your jaw feels tight, or maybe your shoulders become. Muscle tension can also be associated with backaches and tension headaches.

## Progressive Muscle Relaxation

One method of reducing muscle tension that people have found helpful is through a technique called Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR). In progressive muscle relaxation exercises, you tense up particular muscles and then relax them, and then you practise this technique consistently.

### preparing for relaxation

When you are beginning to practice progressive muscle relaxation exercises keep in mind the following points.

- **Physical injuries.** If you have any injuries, or a history of physical problems that may cause muscle pain, always consult your doctor before you start.
- **Select your surroundings.** Minimise the distraction to your five senses. Such as turning off the TV and radio, and using soft lighting.
- **Make yourself comfortable.** Use a chair that comfortably seats your body, including your head. Wear loose clothing, and take off your shoes.
- **Internal mechanics.** Avoid practicing after big, heavy meals, and do not practice after consuming any intoxicants, such as alcohol.

### general procedure

- 1 Once you've set aside the time and place for relaxation, slow down your breathing and give yourself permission to relax.
- 2 When you are ready to begin, tense the muscle group described. Make sure you can feel the tension, but not so much that you feel a great deal of pain. Keep the muscle tensed for approximately 5 seconds.
- 3 Relax the muscles and keep it relaxed for approximately 10 seconds. It may be helpful to say something like "Relax" as you relax the muscle.
- 4 When you have finished the relaxation procedure, remain seated for a few moments allowing yourself to become alert.

## Relaxation sequence

1. **Right hand and forearm.** Make a fist with your right hand.
2. **Right upper arm.** Bring your right forearm up to your shoulder to "make a muscle".
3. **Left hand and forearm.**
4. **Left upper arm.**
5. **Forehead.** Raise your eyebrows as high as they will go, as though you were surprised by something.
6. **Eyes and cheeks.** Squeeze your eyes tight shut.
7. **Mouth and jaw.** Open your mouth as wide as you can, as you might when you're yawning.
8. **Neck. !!!** Be careful as you tense these muscles. Face forward and then pull your head back slowly, as though you are looking up to the ceiling.
9. **Shoulders.** Tense the muscles in your shoulders as you bring your shoulders up towards your ears.
10. **Shoulder blades/Back.** Push your shoulder blades back, trying to almost touch them together, so that your chest is pushed forward.
11. **Chest and stomach.** Breathe in deeply, filling up your lungs and chest with air.
12. **Hips and buttocks.** Squeeze your buttock muscles
13. **Right upper leg.** Tighten your right thigh.
14. **Right lower leg. !!!** Do this slowly and carefully to avoid cramps. Pull your toes towards you to stretch the calf muscle.
15. **Right foot.** Curl your toes downwards.
16. **Left upper leg.** Repeat as for right upper leg.
17. **Left lower leg.** Repeat as for right lower leg.
18. **Left foot.** Repeat as for right foot.

**Practice means progress.** Only through practice can you become more aware of your muscles, how they respond with tension, and how you can relax them. Training your body to respond differently to stress is like any training – practising consistently is the key.

# what is mindfulness?



Have you ever noticed that when you are doing quite familiar and repetitive tasks, like driving your car, or vacuuming, that you mind is often miles away thinking about something else? You may be fantasising about going on a vacation, worrying about some upcoming event, or thinking about any number of other things.

In either case you are not focusing on your current experience, and you are not really in touch with the 'here and now.' This way of operating is often referred to as **automatic pilot** mode.

**Mindfulness** is the opposite of automatic pilot mode. It is about experiencing the world that is firmly in the 'here and now.' This mode is referred to as the **being** mode. It offers a way of freeing oneself from automatic and unhelpful ways of thinking and responding.

## Benefits of Mindfulness

By learning to be in mindful mode more often, it is possible to develop a new habit that helps to weaken old, unhelpful and automatic thinking habits. For people with emotional problems, these old habits can involve being overly pre-occupied with thinking about the future, the past, themselves, or their emotions in a negative way. Mindfulness training in this case does not aim to immediately control, remove, or fix this unpleasant experience. Rather, it aims to develop a skill to place you in a better position to break free of or not 'buy into' these unhelpful habits that are causing distress and preventing positive action.

## Core Features of Mindfulness

### Observing

The first major element of mindfulness involves observing your experience in a manner that is more direct and sensual (**sensing mode**), rather than being analytical (**thinking mode**). A natural tendency of the mind is to try and think about something rather than directly experience it. Mindfulness thus aims to shift one's focus of attention away from thinking to simply observing thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations (e.g., touch, sight, sound, smell, taste) with a kind and gentle curiosity.

### Describing

This aspect of mindfulness relates to noticing the very fine details of what you are observing. For example, if you are observing something like a tangerine, the aim is to describe what it looks like, what is its shape, colour, and texture. You might place a descriptive name to it, like "orange", "smooth", or "round". The same process also can be applied to emotions (e.g. "heavy", "tense").

### Participating Fully

An aim of mindfulness is to allow yourself to consider the whole of your experience, without excluding anything. Try to notice all aspects of whatever task or activity you are doing, and do it with your full care and attention.

### Being Non-Judgemental

It is important to adopt an accepting stance towards your experience. A significant reason for prolonged emotional distress relates to attempts to avoid or control your experience. When being more mindful, no attempt is made to evaluate experiences or to say that they are good, bad, right, or wrong, and no attempt is made to immediately control or avoid the experience. Accepting all of one's experience is one of the most challenging aspects of mindfulness, and takes time and practice to develop. Bringing a kind and gentle curiosity to one's experience is one way of adopting a non-judgmental stance.



### Focusing on One Thing at a Time

When observing your own experience, a certain level of effort is required to focus your attention on only one thing at a time, from moment to moment. It is natural for distracting thoughts to emerge while observing, and there is a tendency to follow and 'chase' these thoughts with more thinking. The art of 'being present' is to develop the skill of noticing when you have drifted away from the observing and sensing mode, into thinking mode. When this happens it is not a mistake, but just acknowledge it has happened, and then gently return to observing your experience.

## How to Become Mindful

Mindfulness is a skill that takes time to develop. It is not easy, and like any skill it requires a certain level of effort, time, patience, and ongoing practice.

Mindfulness can be taught in a number of ways. Meditation is one of the key techniques used in mindfulness training, but not the only technique. Contact your mental health professional for further information on mindfulness training and whether it may be suited to your needs.



# challenging unhelpful thinking styles

**Evidence Testing** is all about trying to be objective about our thoughts. It is about asking yourself questions that will help you look for other information and make an informed decision about your thoughts, instead of just accepting them as fact.

## 1. CHECK THE EVIDENCE



If this thought was put on trial, what evidence would the defence present (what facts support the thought being true)?

What evidence would the prosecution present against (what information works against the thought or shows that it isn't true all the time)?

## 2. CHALLENGE UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES

Unhelpful Thinking Style		Disputation Questions
Mental Filter	➔	Consider the whole picture - Am I taking all the information into account? - What else is going on that I'm ignoring?
Jumping to Conclusions	➔	You know what they say about assuming... - How do I know this? - What are some alternative explanations for this? - If I was feeling differently, would I still think this?
Personalisation	➔	Find all the causes - Was this entirely my responsibility? - What other factors might have affected the outcome?
Catastrophising	➔	Put it in perspective - What are the possible outcomes – best, worst, most likely? - Am I jumping ahead of myself? - How important is this in the scheme of things?
Black and White Thinking	➔	Find the shades of grey - Am I being extreme or rigid? - Is there an in-between where things are not perfect but not a disaster?
Shoulding and Musting	➔	Be flexible - Is this a strict rule, or is it a desire or possibility that didn't work in this instance? - Can I replace this with a "could" or "would have liked to"?
Labelling	➔	Judge the situation, not the person - Does this behaviour or situation reflect how things always are? - Are there examples where this label hasn't been true?
Overgeneralising	➔	Be specific - Does this apply to all situations or am I overgeneralising? - What are the facts and what are my interpretations?
Disqualifying / Ignoring the Positives	➔	Acknowledge the good - Am I downplaying or ignoring some of the evidence? - What are the good things in this situation?

## 3. CHANGE MY PERSPECTIVE

What other ways are there of viewing the situation?

If I was giving advice to someone I care about in this situation, what would I say?

If I want to act in a certain way, how would I have to think differently?

# Fun Activities Catalogue

The following is a list of activities that might be fun and pleasurable for you. Feel free to add your own fun activities to the list.

1. Going to a quiz or trivia night
2. Spending time in nature
3. Watching the clouds drift by
4. Debating
5. Painting my nails
6. Going ice skating, roller skating/blading
7. Scheduling a day with nothing to do
8. Giving positive feedback about something (e.g. writing a letter or email about good service)
9. Feeding the birds
10. Spending an evening with good friends
11. Making jams or preserves
12. Going out to dinner
13. Buying gifts
14. Having a political discussion
15. Repairing things around the house
16. Washing my car
17. Watching TV, videos
18. Sending a loved one a card in the mail
19. Baking something to share with others (e.g. family, neighbours, friends, work colleagues)
20. Taking a sauna, spa or a steam bath
21. Having a video call with someone who lives far away
22. Organising my wardrobe
23. Playing musical instruments
24. Going to the ballet or opera
25. Lighting scented candles, oils or incense
26. Spending time alone
27. Exercising
28. Putting up a framed picture or artwork
29. Flirting
30. Entertaining
31. Riding a motorbike
32. Wine tasting
33. Going to the planetarium or observatory
34. Birdwatching
35. Doing something spontaneously
36. Going on a picnic
37. Having a warm drink
38. Massaging hand cream into my hands
39. Fantasising about the future
40. Laughing
41. Flying a plane
42. Playing tennis or badminton
43. Clearing my email inbox
44. Planting a terrarium
45. Playing lawn games (e.g. bowls, croquet, bocce)
46. Going to a party
47. Getting out of debt/paying debts
48. Seeing and/or showing photos
49. Going on a city tour
50. Going to an agricultural show
51. Jogging, walking
52. Going to home opens
53. Researching a topic of interest
54. Going to the beach
55. Redecorating
56. Volunteering for a cause I support
57. Smelling a flower
58. Opening the curtains and blinds to let light in
59. Going to the zoo or aquarium
60. Doing jigsaw puzzles
61. Donating old clothes or items to charity
62. Lying in the sun
63. Learning a magic trick
64. Talking on the phone
65. Listening to a podcast or radio show
66. Walking around my city and noticing architecture of buildings
67. Doing arts and crafts
68. Going on a ghost tour
69. Sketching, painting
70. Mowing the lawn
71. Going horseback riding
72. Doing the dishes
73. Sitting outside and listening to birds sing
74. Going to a free public lecture
75. Travelling to national parks
76. Going to a fair or fete
77. Playing cards
78. Putting moisturising cream on my face / body
79. Volunteering at an animal shelter
80. Re-watching a favourite movie
81. Gardening
82. Going camping
83. Playing volleyball
84. Going bike riding
85. Entering a competition
86. Doing crossword puzzles
87. Patting or cuddling my pet
88. Cooking a special meal
89. Soaking in the bathtub
90. Having a treatment at a day spa (e.g. facial)
91. Putting extra effort in to my appearance
92. Playing golf
93. Doing a favour for someone
94. Building a bird house or feeder
95. Looking at pictures of beautiful scenery
96. Having family get-togethers
97. Listening to music
98. Learning a new language
99. Taking a free online class
100. Working
101. Washing my hair
102. Singing around the house

103. Flipping through old photo albums
104. Upcycling or creatively reusing old items
105. Going sailing
106. Stretching muscles
107. Maintaining a musical instrument (e.g. restringing guitar)
108. Playing soccer
109. Buying clothes
110. Going to the botanic gardens
111. Going to a scenic spot and enjoying the view
112. Going to the speedway
113. Snuggling up with a soft blanket
114. Listening to an audiobook
115. Going to see live stand-up comedy
116. Writing down a list of things I am grateful for
117. Maintaining an aquarium
118. Playing Frisbee
119. Teaching a special skill to someone else (e.g. knitting, woodworking, painting, language)
120. Playing chess (with a friend or at a local club)
121. Going to a games arcade
122. Jumping on a trampoline
123. Sending a text message to a friend
124. Going fishing
125. Doodling
126. Putting a vase of fresh flowers in my house
127. Participating in a protest I support
128. Going to a movie
129. Surfing, bodyboarding or stand up paddle boarding
130. Baking home-made bread
131. Walking barefoot on soft grass
132. Watching a movie marathon
133. Skipping/ jumping rope
134. Being physically intimate with someone I want to be close to
135. Going to karaoke
136. Wearing an outfit that makes me feel good
137. Cooking some meals to freeze for later
138. Hobbies (stamp collecting, model building, etc.)
139. Talking to an older relative and asking them questions about their life
140. Listening to classical music
141. Photography
142. Watching funny videos on YouTube
143. Doing something religious or spiritual (e.g. going to church, praying)
144. Seeing a movie at the drive-in or outdoor cinema
145. Making my bed with fresh sheets
146. Lifting weights
147. Early morning coffee and newspaper
148. Planning a themed party (e.g. costume, murder mystery)
149. Wearing comfortable clothes
150. Shining my shoes
151. Acting
152. Going swimming
153. De-cluttering
154. Going rock climbing
155. Whittling
156. Going on a ride at a theme park or fair
157. Arranging flowers
158. Going to the gym
159. Working on my car or bicycle
160. Juggling or learning to juggle
161. Contacting an old school friend
162. Calligraphy
163. Sleeping
164. Driving
165. Going crabbing
166. Playing with my pets
167. Abseiling
168. Going kayaking, canoeing or white-water rafting
169. Listening to the radio
170. Doing Sudoku
171. Planting vegetables or flowers
172. Walks on the riverfront/foreshore
173. Shooting pool or playing billiards
174. Getting an indoor plant
175. Surfing the internet
176. Doing embroidery, cross stitching
177. Browsing a hardware store
178. Donating blood
179. Buying books
180. Meditating
181. Training my pet to do a new trick
182. Planning a day's activities
183. Waking up early, and getting ready at a leisurely pace
184. Going to a Bingo night
185. Playing ping pong / table tennis
186. Buying an ice-cream from an ice-cream truck
187. Going on a hot air balloon ride
188. Sightseeing
189. Organising my work space
190. Dangling my feet off a jetty
191. Writing (e.g. poems, articles, blog, books)
192. Dancing in the dark
193. Having an indoor picnic
194. Reading classic literature
195. Going on a date
196. Taking children places
197. Going whale watching
198. Putting on perfume or cologne
199. Digging my toes in the sand
200. Hitting golf balls at a driving range
201. Reading magazines or newspapers
202. Calling a friend
203. Sending a handwritten letter
204. Going snorkelling
205. Going hiking, bush walking
206. Reading fiction

207. Meeting new people
208. Doing 5 minutes of calm deep breathing
209. Buying new stationary
210. Turning off electronic devices for an hour (e.g. computer, phone, TV)
211. Buying music (MP3s, CDs, records)
212. Relaxing
213. Going to a footy game (or rugby, soccer, basketball, etc.)
214. Going skiing
215. Doing woodworking
216. Planning a nice surprise for someone else
217. Playing video games
218. Holding a garage sale
219. Saying "I love you"
220. Making a playlist of upbeat songs
221. Colouring in
222. Playing laser tag or paintball
223. Joining a community choir
224. Doing a nagging task (e.g. making a phone call, scheduling an appointment, replying to an email)
225. Taking a ferry ride
226. Shaping a bonsai plant
227. Watching planes take off/ land at the airport
228. Planning my career
229. Reading non-fiction
230. Writing a song or composing music
231. Taking my dog to the park
232. Borrowing books from the library
233. Having a barbecue
234. Sewing
235. Dancing
236. Having lunch with a friend
237. Talking to or introducing myself to my neighbours
238. Holding hands
239. Going to a free art exhibition
240. Making a 'To-Do' list of tasks
241. Travelling abroad, interstate or within the state
242. Having quiet evenings
243. Geocaching
244. Singing in the shower
245. Browsing at a second hand book shop
246. Test driving an expensive car
247. Refurbishing furniture
248. Exchanging emails, chatting on the internet
249. Knitting/crocheting/quilting
250. Napping in a hammock
251. Skipping stones on the water
252. Doing ballet, jazz/tap dancing
253. Archery
254. Going on a Segway tour
255. Visiting a grandparent
256. Making a gift for someone
257. Having discussions with friends
258. Trying a new recipe
259. Pampering myself at home (e.g. putting on a face mask)
260. Watching my children play
261. Going to a community or school play
262. Making jewellery
263. Reading poetry
264. Going to the hills
265. Getting/giving a massage
266. Shooting hoops at the local basketball courts
267. Flying kites
268. Savouring a piece of fresh fruit
269. Playing hockey
270. Eating outside during my lunch break
271. Floating on a pool lounge
272. Making a pot of tea
273. Using special items (e.g. fine china, silver cutlery, jewellery, clothes, souvenir mugs)
274. Doing a DIY project (e.g. making homemade soap, making a mosaic)
275. Taking care of my plants
276. Telling a joke
277. Going to a public place and people watching
278. Discussing books
279. Going window shopping
280. Watching boxing, wrestling
281. Giving someone a genuine compliment
282. Practising yoga, Pilates
283. Walking around the block
284. Shaving
285. Genuinely listening to others
286. Participating in a clean-up (e.g. picking up litter at the beach or park)
287. Eating fish and chips at the beach
288. Rearranging the furniture in my house
289. Doing water aerobics
290. Blowing bubbles
291. Buying new furniture
292. Watching a sunset or sunrise
293. Star gazing
294. Watching a funny TV show or movie
295. Making pottery, or taking a pottery class
296. Playing mini golf
297. Recycling old items
298. Going to a water park
299. Practising karate, judo
300. Boxing a punching bag
301. Cleaning
302. Driving a Go Kart
303. Daydreaming
304. Learning about my family tree
305. Picking berries at a farm
306. Watching kids play sport
307. Setting up a budget
308. Writing a positive comment on a website /blog
309. Getting a manicure or pedicure
310. Collecting things (coins, shells, etc.)

