

Stress Awareness Month 30-DAY CHALLENGE

It's fair to say that the past 12 months have been more demanding than most of us would have imagined. A recent study by the Stress Management Society found that 65% of people have felt more stressed since the pandemic began. Even before Covid-19, modern life had created an epidemic of anxiety, with high stress levels damaging the health of millions. To mark the start of Stress Awareness Month, we're joining in with the Stress Management Society's 30-day challenge. Below, we've given you 30 tips to get you started: each day, simply pick a stress-busting action to complete from our categories and give your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing a lift. Why 30 days? Because that's how long it takes for an action to become a habit. Our social media details are at the bottom of the page – let us know how you're getting on as the month progresses!

PHYSICAL

- 1 LEAVE YOUR PHONE AT HOME**
Now the weather's turning nicer, go for a long walk ... without your phone! 
- 2 EAT WELL, FEEL WELL**
Find a recipe online for a tasty, healthy meal. Eating well is a great way of reducing stress. 
- 3 PUT THE 'NO' INTO 'NOTIFICATIONS'**
Turn off ALL your phone's notifications for the day. No pings, no FOMO, no distractions. 
- 4 APP-LY YOURSELF**
Download one of the thousands of fitness apps that can help banish stress – from crunches to push-ups to simply counting your daily steps! 
- 5 GO TOTALLY TECH FREE**
Digital detox: organise a tech-free family day. No phones, no consoles, no tablets for 24 hours. 
- 6 STREAM SOME STRESS AWAY**
Find a new workout or yoga routine on YouTube and try it out. Exercise is stress kryptonite! 
- 7 TIME FOR A CUPPA**
Working from home? Take regular screen breaks. Even just five minutes can do the trick! 
- 8 LAUGH YOUR CARES AWAY**
They say laughter is the best medicine. And they're right! Make time to watch a classic TV or movie clip that always makes you giggle. 
- 9 TAKE A BREATH... OR TWO**
FitBits and Apple Watches have built-in breathing exercises to lessen stress. If you don't have wearable tech, YouTube has lots of breathing exercise videos. 
- 10 PUSH THE ENVELOPE!**
Write and post a card or a letter to a loved one. It'll make them feel good too! 

MENTAL

- 1 SOUNDS RELAXING**
Stream some stress-busting audio. Ocean waves, jungle sounds or ambient music are a blissful way of winding down before bed. 
- 2 WELL, FANCY THAT**
Go online and learn something new. Just any random fact that you didn't know this morning! 
- 3 ELIMINATE SOME EMAILS**
Few things scream "mental clutter" louder than an overflowing inbox. Weed out those emails you've actioned that are now just taking up space. 
- 4 BEAT THIS**
Create a feelgood playlist on your phone ... all those tracks that never fail to give you a boost! 
- 5 CLEANSE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA**
Tidy up your Twitter and streamline your Snapchat. Unfollow accounts, leave groups, hide updates – all the stuff you never look at. 
- 6 LET THEM WAIT**
It's OK not to reply to friends' messages immediately. Maintaining a chat when you're already busy can create more stress. 
- 7 GET PRODUCTIVE**
Download an app to boost your productivity and help combat stress. It could be a sleep monitor, a memory training app or a 'to-do' list manager. 
- 8 PEACE IN A POD**
There are some brilliant stress management podcasts out there. Fire up your podcast app and see which ones appeal to you. 
- 9 SPRING CLEAN YOUR PHONE**
De-clutter your phone: notifications, the camera roll, unused apps. Your phone will benefit and so will your brain! 
- 10 HELP YOURSELF**
Apps like SAM (Self-help for Anxiety Management) can help you to understand and manage your stress levels better. 

EMOTIONAL

- 1 FABULOUS FACETIME**
Video call a friend or family member, just to catch up. Or, if you have time, do both! 
- 2 SPREAD SOME GOOD VIBES**
Choose your favourite post of the day from your social feeds and share it. 
- 3 CUTE, CUDDLY AND CALMING**
An old school classic: just google image search "adorable kittens" or "cute puppies", whatever. It literally never fails to make your day better! 
- 4 READY PLAYER ONE**
Gaming is good! The achievement and enjoyment you get from progressing can really lift your mood. Just don't play too long! 
- 5 BRIGHTEN THEIR DAY**
Share some love! Message someone just to tell them that you're thinking of them. 
- 6 U OK HUN?**
Go online and reach out to someone you think might be struggling with stress too. Just talking about it can help both of you. 
- 7 LIKE THIS, LIKE THAT**
Spread some positivity by reacting to your friends' social posts. Sprinkling those hearts and thumbs up will make you feel happier, too. 
- 8 START ON THE FRONT FOOT**
Set an automated reminder about something you were proud of today. Time it to go off within an hour of getting up tomorrow. 
- 9 PIC AND CHOOSE**
Scroll through your phone's camera roll. When you find a pic that makes you smile, share it with whoever else is in it! 
- 10 SHARE SOME LOVE**
Someone you know achieved something special? Go online and publicly congratulate them! 