



People in the Far East have stress rates so low, researchers knew they had to be on to something. Copy their secrets for a stress-proof you!

**“Zipping up” against stress.** Studies show that stress causes us to feel drained. But the Eastern practice of tai chi, which views the body as a network of energy “meridians” or channels, provides a quick fix:

First, rub the palms of your hands together to activate the energy centers in your hands. Next, place your right palm several inches out from your body and at the level of your groin and, following the path of an imaginary zipper, bring it slowly up to your lower lip—a path said to trace the body’s prime meridian, or central energy source. Wacky as this sounds, study after study confirms that when you “sip up” you feel more energetic and more able to ward off stress.

**Treating yourself to a collarbone rub.** In this technique adapted from the ancient art of acupuncture, you use the index and third fingers of both hands to gently, but firmly, massage the spots about one inch below and to either side of your collarbone. It promotes the flow of energy and releases tension.

Modern studies show that this 20-second exercise promotes the release of mind-boosting endorphins, instantly producing the feeling of inner balance that’s associated with low stress.

**Laughing out loud.** All over India, members of laughter clubs start their day with a chuckle.

Studies show that laughter—even if it starts as a fake laugh—suppresses the “stress chemical” cortisol in the brain. Which is why Tibetan Buddhist monks have made a habit out of laughing out loud immediately upon waking for over 5000 years.

**Thinking about what you have in common with the people who are stressing you out.**

The next time your co-worker seems impossible or gets on your nerves, simply remember that she has a family, too, and is trying to juggle work and home demands, just like you are. By doing this, you’ll mirror a practice similar to “analytic meditation” and you’ll instantly decrease your stress level.

It’s the differences between you that cause stress. But focusing on the way you’re similar will make those differences less meaningful and, therefore, less stressful.

**Breathing stress away.** Find a quiet spot and take a moment to decide which part of your body is registering the upset—is there a tightness in your stomach? Throbbing in your temples? Once you’ve located the problem area, breathe deeply as you picture “breathing into” that specific place for a dozen breaths or so.

Studies show that people who use this strategy, adapted from yoga, instantly feel less stressed.

**Asking yourself, “Is this something I need to do anything about?”** In the ancient Chinese book of wisdom, it is written: “In the practice of the Tao, every day something is dropped.” So, whenever you feel overloaded, ask yourself whether you can or need to do anything about the situation in question. If the answer is no, let it go—or let someone else take over.