

100

ways to manage *stress*

When we look at our health, we need to consider many different factors. This can be overwhelming for a lot of people. You can't do everything in one go, so it's all about making small, sustainable changes over time. Here, I'm going to share some insights I've learned from working with clients in my day-to-day practice, and from studying with leaders in this field at UCLA. I'm also going to show how I manage my own stress with the help of thought leaders such as Dr Mark Hyman, Dr Gabor Mate and Matthew Walker.

Over the following pages, we will look at daily habits, food, relationships, technology, sleep, financial matters, work, connecting to nature, and much more. As you read through my short tips, you might even recognise what I like to call 'blind spots' — areas you didn't even realise were causing you stress and tension. Look upon these as a gift, because once you know more, you can do better.

There is absolutely no one alive today with no stress, so before you read this, I ask you to consider these questions: is there something in your life that is causing you stress, anxiety or leading you down a negative emotional path? Maybe you could turn your most painful issue into your biggest inspiration, leading to massive personal growth and a reduction in stress?

So what is stress? Well, basically, it is being here but wanting to be there! Think about it — your life now wants to be in the promised land, in the future, where the grass is greener and life is problem-free.

OK, now back to the real world, where all we have is the present moment (more on this in the mindfulness section). When you are experiencing stress, you are stretching your body and mind beyond what they can cope with. Think of yourself as an elastic band being stretched to capacity. If you don't start to manage your stress, the elastic will either snap, or lose its flexibility and become rigid. Both scenarios are bad for you and your health.

Stress is the resistance to how things are right now. In other words, you are resisting life. Your stressful issue, whatever it is, will drain your energy and resources. I firmly believe everyone can live an extraordinary life, once you work with the flow of life, and stop resisting and jumping in and swimming upstream every day. This means accepting where you are, and allowing life to flow. This does not mean you sit back, but rather take unforced action that will help you slow down, maximise your time, work with your mind, and live a better life.

Having acute stress is a normal condition that we are meant to have during a stressful event, but it's supposed to go away. Over 10,000 years ago, when humans were hunter-gatherers, if you were attacked by a saber-toothed tiger and needed to run for your life, your body would launch into a series of chemical reactions. It would then prepare by switching to fight, flight or freeze mode (aka sympathetic mode). Your digestive system would flood with acid to shut down your digestion, because it takes so much energy to digest your food, and because

Our resident wellness guru, **Alison Canavan**, who is also ambassador for INM's upcoming Vitality Expo event, has everything you need to know about managing your stress, at home and at work, by implementing small changes to your daily routine

you'd need all your energy to fight and prepare for the danger.

That same acid would seep on to your skin so that you don't taste very good — if the tiger bites into you, he won't like it. Then your blood starts to thicken and coagulate so that if you do get bitten, you don't bleed to death instantly. Your bladder and bowels evacuate, so you're lighter on your feet, and your immune system goes on the back burner.

None of the modern-day situations we experience — fighting with your boss, being a stressed parent, being caught in traffic — call for this extreme-stress response, but our

bodies have not adapted out of this stress reaction, and it's now maladaptive, leading most of us to live in a stressed state most of the time. This inhibits us from performing and being at our best. The acidity from the stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol, can also build up and change the body's pH, which leads to inflammation in the body — and then to autoimmune and digestive issues. In the really long-term, it can even lead to atrophy in the brain.

We can't eradicate stress. A little is actually good, with studies showing us that perhaps experiencing a bit of stress makes us harder and better able to tolerate and adapt to life's difficulties. It's about your own personal balance and challenging your own limiting beliefs about issues of time and sleep.

Myth of no time

The myth of no time is everywhere, but just look at what stress is costing you and how much — so many of us are spending on coffee, cigarettes, sleeping pills, medication and sugar, in an effort to combat our fatigue from stress.

The key for us now is personal awareness. Becoming aware basically means waking up and realising that you have an inner bank of knowledge that helps you to see and understand the wisdom you already have. You can trigger this inner wisdom by listening to podcasts and reading, but only you know what's right for your body, and when you feel off.

The Vitality Expo 2018 takes place on September 8 and 9 at the RDS. In the 1590s, the word vitality came from the Latin *vitalitatem*, meaning 'vital force, life'. This vital life-force comes from your capacity to live your life to its fullest. I'm delighted to be an ambassador for the upcoming show, as it reflects my values and ethos within the well-being space — which is looking at our health from a full 360 approach and supporting independent retailers, who, in turn, help to support our local communities.

The Vitality Expo 2018 is brought to you by Health Stores Ireland, a group representing the majority of health-food stores in the country. The event promises to bring you the best of wholefood cookery and the newest in superfoods and techniques; the best in artisan and local producers, and the finest offerings from the world of aromatherapy and natural skincare. I will be there on both days, so please come and say hi.



FASHION

Cover: Dress, Preen by Thornton Bregazzi, Brown Thomas.
Jewellery throughout, Alison's own

Contents page: Dress, Preen by Thornton Bregazzi, Brown Thomas

This page: Dress, Claudie Pierlot, Brown Thomas

THE TEAM

Photography by David Conachy
Styling by Chloe Brennan
Make-up by Lynsey Mullen
Hair by Debbie Carr, both Brown Sugar,
50 Sth William St, D2, tel: (01) 616-9967,
or see brownsugar.ie

LOCATION

House Dublin occupies two Georgian townhouses on Leeson Street, between The Grand Canal and St Stephen's Green. House has a feeling of relaxed glamour, luxury and ease throughout and offers stylish accommodation, all-day dining, a luxurious Wine Room, Glasshouse and Garden spaces, and the Red Room nightclub. House also hosts a range of private functions such as birthdays, weddings, celebrations, Christmas parties and corporate events. House Dublin, 27 Leeson St Lwr, D2, tel: (01) 905-9090, or see housedublin.ie

FOOD & NOURISHMENT

According to Dr Mark Hyman, who specialises in functional medicine, the right diet can do wonders to reduce the impact of stress on your life. When you eat whole, real foods, you restore balance to insulin, cortisol, and other hormones.

1 Clean up your diet from mind-robbing molecules such as caffeine, alcohol, and refined sugars. Eat regularly to avoid the short-term stress of starvation on your body, and you will maintain an even-keeled mindset throughout the day, even when things get hectic.

2 Replace those foods with clean protein, healthy fats, leafy and cruciferous vegetables, berries, and non-gluten grains. Food is information that controls your gene expression, hormones, and metabolism. When you eat the right foods, you balance blood sugar, restore hormonal balance, and reduce stress's damaging impact.

3 WHY SUGAR CAN CAUSE STRESS

So, you stop by your favourite coffee shop on your way to work. Frazzled by a million demands and work-hour traffic, you realise you haven't had breakfast, and order a muffin along with your gigantic coffee. In that seemingly innocuous breakfast scenario, the caffeine in coffee increases catecholamines, your stress hormones. The stress response elicits cortisol, which, coupled with the sugar in that muffin, increases insulin. Insulin increases inflammation, and this makes you feel lousy. And the sugar in the muffin increases cortisol and adrenaline, the stress hormones. Yes, sugar literally jacks up your stress hormones, even if you are not stressed! Chances are, you'll continue that pattern throughout the day. You've created the perfect storm for hormonal hell, which will leave you tired, miserable and storing fat. So, start the day with a healthy breakfast and give yourself the best chance of keeping stress low. (See drhyman.com)

4 Try Dr Kelly Brogan's breakfast smoothie for hormonal balance and stress reduction. Since making the switch to Kelly's famous KB smoothie, my body and mind feel much clearer:

Ingredients: ■ Half a cup of frozen organic cherries (or other berries) ■ 8fl oz of fermented coconut water, coconut water, or filtered water ■ 3 tablespoons of collagen hydrolysate as a protein base ■ One tablespoon of sprouted nut butter or sunflower seed butter ■ 3 free-range egg yolks ■ One tablespoon of coconut oil ■ 1-2 tablespoons of ghee ■ 1-2 tablespoons of raw cocoa powder.

Blend and enjoy! (See kellybrogan.com)



Stressed spelled backwards is desserts



6 The gut-brain connection and stress is a really important one. Researchers have discovered a lesser-known nervous system in our gut, now known as our 'second brain', which communicates with the brain in our head. Together, our two brains play a key role in certain diseases in our bodies and overall health. Make sure you look after your mind with relaxation techniques, and your gut with good foods, and this will help keep the stress connection low between these two.

7 STAY HYDRATED

The human body is approximately 70pc water. The effect that water has on our brains is probably best understood when we understand that our brains are made up of approximately 85pc water. Here, again, we come back to the chemical reason why you get more stressed: when you're even mildly dehydrated, cortisol levels in the body increase. As we now know, cortisol production is triggered by the stress response. And one way to balance these chemicals in your brain? Drink more water. So, if you're looking for a simple way to unwind from your stress-filled life, try drinking a glass of water — it will help you to cope better with stressful situations.



8 *'Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live' — Jim Rohn*

9 Eat more bananas, as they are packed with potassium, which is incredibly important in helping combat stress. Other happy foods are avocados, aubergines, pineapples, tomatoes and walnuts.



10 Magnesium is a powerful nutrient and antidote to stress. In fact, according to Dr Hyman, it's the most powerful relaxation mineral available, and it can improve your sleep!

11 Over-eating can put too much stress on your body, so keeping a food diary can help you keep track of what you actually eat, not what you think you eat.

12 "Food can distract you from your pain. But food can't take away your pain. In fact, over-eating the wrong foods can create more pain." — **Karen Salmansohn**

13 ALCOHOL Studies prove over and over again that drinking to relieve stress may actually compound the problem. Sedation is not the same as rest or quality sleep. You can't chase stress with alcohol, or you'll be running around in circles.

“Carers with
experience and
expertise”

Thelma Mansfield

 Home
Instead
SENIOR CARE[®]

To us, it's personal[®]

Offices Nationwide

1890 930 847

HomeInstead.ie

HELP YOURSELF

14 “The shorter your sleep, the shorter your life. Shorter sleep predicts or causes mortality. In fact, the global sleep-loss epidemic that is underway right now, and is one of the greatest public health challenges, is a slow form of self-euthanasia” — **Matthew Walker**, Professor of neuroscience and psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, and founder and director of the Centre for Human Sleep.

15 SLEEP ON YOUR PROBLEMS

In sleep stages one to two, our brains are in their editing phase, literally deciding which memories to keep and which ones to toss. Sleep literally makes connections you might never have consciously formed (something most of us intuitively know). No one says: “I’m going to eat on a problem.” We always sleep on it!

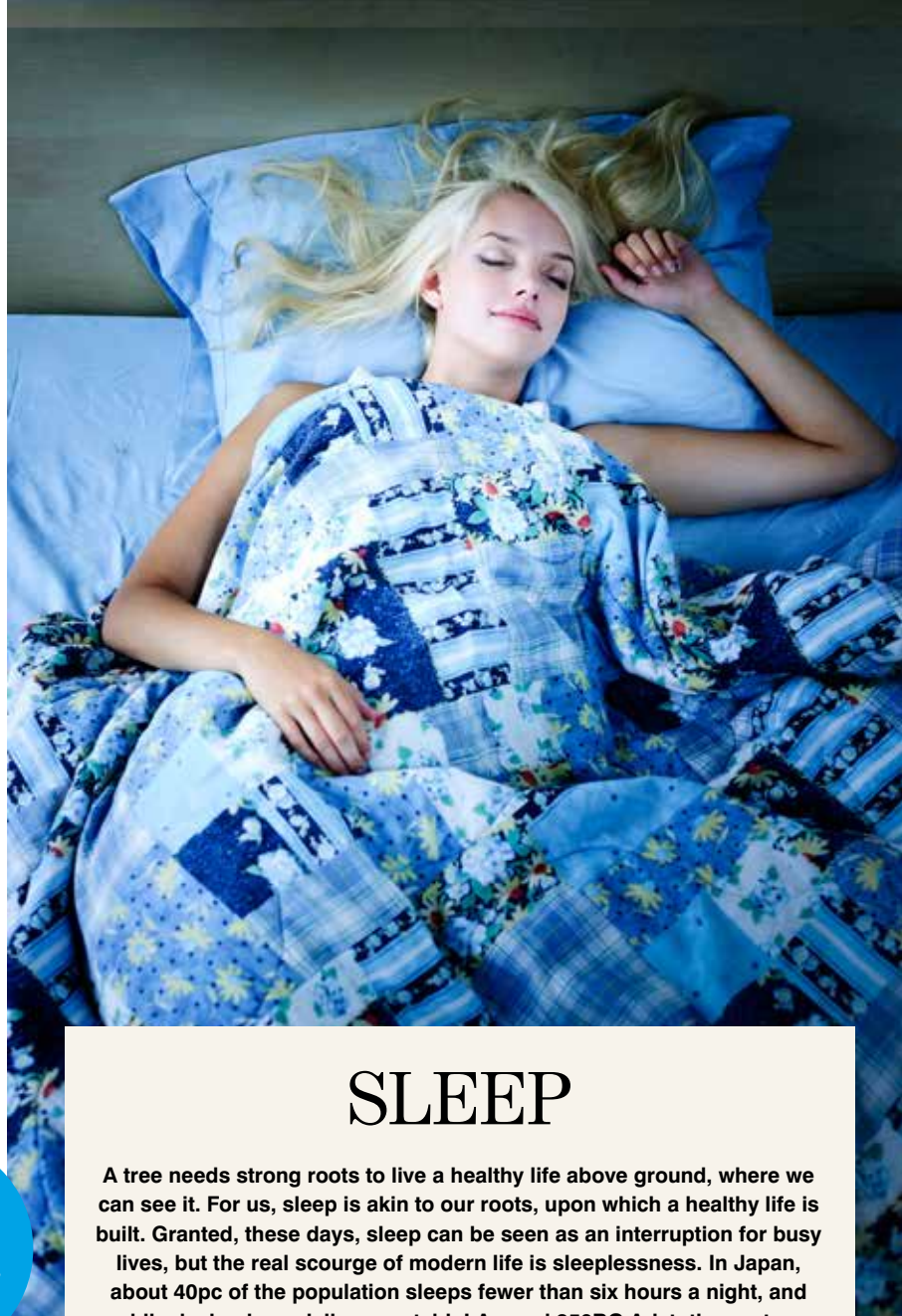
16 Get your vitamin ZZZs. We need seven to nine hours of sleep to regulate mood and behaviour. In a 2011 study by Matthew Walker (author of *Why We Sleep*) he found that sleep deprivation was associated with maladaptive emotional regulation and addictive behaviours. This was shown to lead to exaggerated neural and behavioural reactivity to the negative, meaning you are less likely to see the good things that happen each day, making your waking efforts to live better far more difficult.

17
‘Sleep is the best meditation’
Dalai Lama

18 Only drink coffee before noon. I have so many clients who swear caffeine is not a problem for them, but when they follow this rule, for most, the quality of their sleep improves. There is considerable genetic variation in terms of how each of us metabolises caffeine. For many, it can take several hours to fully process the caffeine. Coffee is molecularly very similar to adenosine — the chemical that tells your brain you are sleepy. Coffee is actually not giving you energy, but masking your brain’s ability to feel tired.



19 *‘Sleep is an investment in the energy you need to be effective tomorrow’* — **Tim Roth**



SLEEP

A tree needs strong roots to live a healthy life above ground, where we can see it. For us, sleep is akin to our roots, upon which a healthy life is built. Granted, these days, sleep can be seen as an interruption for busy lives, but the real scourge of modern life is sleeplessness. In Japan, about 40pc of the population sleeps fewer than six hours a night, and public dozing is socially acceptable! Around 350BC Aristotle, wrote an essay, ‘On sleep and sleeplessness’, wondering why we do it. For the next 2,300 years, no one had a good answer, but today, with imaging machines, we are approaching a convincing answer to Aristotle. Sleep is vital for our mental and physical health, and when our circadian rhythm breaks down, research shows, we are at increased risk for illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and dementia.

20 If you have a traumatic or difficult experience, wait, if possible, at least six to eight hours before you sleep. According to neuroscientist Gina Poe at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) sleeping too soon after a major event, before some of the ordeal is mentally resolved, is more likely to turn the experience into long-term memories.

21 Taking a relaxing bath an hour before bedtime with Epsom salts and lavender essential oil encourages good rest.



22 ROUTINE

It’s not just kids who need a routine — we do, too! Most of us lead hectic lives. Going to bed and waking up around the same time every day helps your circadian rhythm come into balance.

23 Clutter is stressful, so take 10 minutes to make sure you tidy the dishes away downstairs, and have a clean sleeping environment in a bedroom that is aired properly.

24 Prepping for the next day helps to reduce stress when you wake. For me, this simple practice eases so much anxiety, and gives me my time back in the morning. Lay out clothes, and if you have kids, get school lunches and uniforms ready.

25 Dimming lights or reading a book will help you to get your body prepared so that you can drift off into relaxing, restorative sleep.



26 **Is your bed the right one?** Because of variations with weight, height, body-heat levels etc, the mattress and pillows we choose should be specific for our needs. The importance of the relationship between your spine, the right mattress and your overall health is paramount. I have a bad back from a car accident years ago, and recently got a consultation from *thesleepshop.ie* when moving house. They are the first in Ireland to have an in-house chiropractor, where they offer a free, no-obligation fitting service for mattresses and pillows.

27 Thriving (you think) on four hours sleep is not a badge of honour, and we need to de-stigmatise sleep. Sleep has such a major effect on our lives, and is essential for decision-making, stress control, blood-sugar balance, mood and craving. Even one night of bad sleep can throw us off.

28 A warm cup of camomile or turmeric tea calms, soothes and comforts before bed.

29 Practising gratitude by writing down three things you are grateful for each day helps you to go to sleep in an energy of appreciation. Every night, with my son James, we scan through our day as we lie in bed, and choose the one thing we are most grateful for. Remember, the energy that we go to sleep in, is the energy we wake up in again the next morning!

30 Stretch before bed and release any tension you have built up from the day.

31 *‘It’s not stress that kills us. It’s our reaction to it’* — **Hans Selye**

32 **JETLAG** You can’t cure jetlag, but you can hack the system. In a new time zone, you can catch up by one hour every day; however, you can speed this up by getting 20-30 minutes of natural daylight in the morning. Don’t wear shades in the morning, as it diminishes that light-reset. Eating is a powerful trigger to reset circadian rhythm, so eat your meals at the regular mealtimes of your new destination. Wear shades in the afternoon, and ensure lots of darkness at night.



ELECTRONICS & EMF

Sleep is the perfect connector for our next section which looks at electronics and EMF (electromagnetic fields) from Wi-Fi and mobile phones. A growing chorus of doctors and researchers warn that electromagnetic fields from many of the hallmarks of modern life have been linked to a wide variety of health risks, ranging from sleeplessness to cancer.

Wireless technology has forever changed how we communicate, but is it coming at a cost, and what can we do to reduce the potential harm to ourselves and our families?

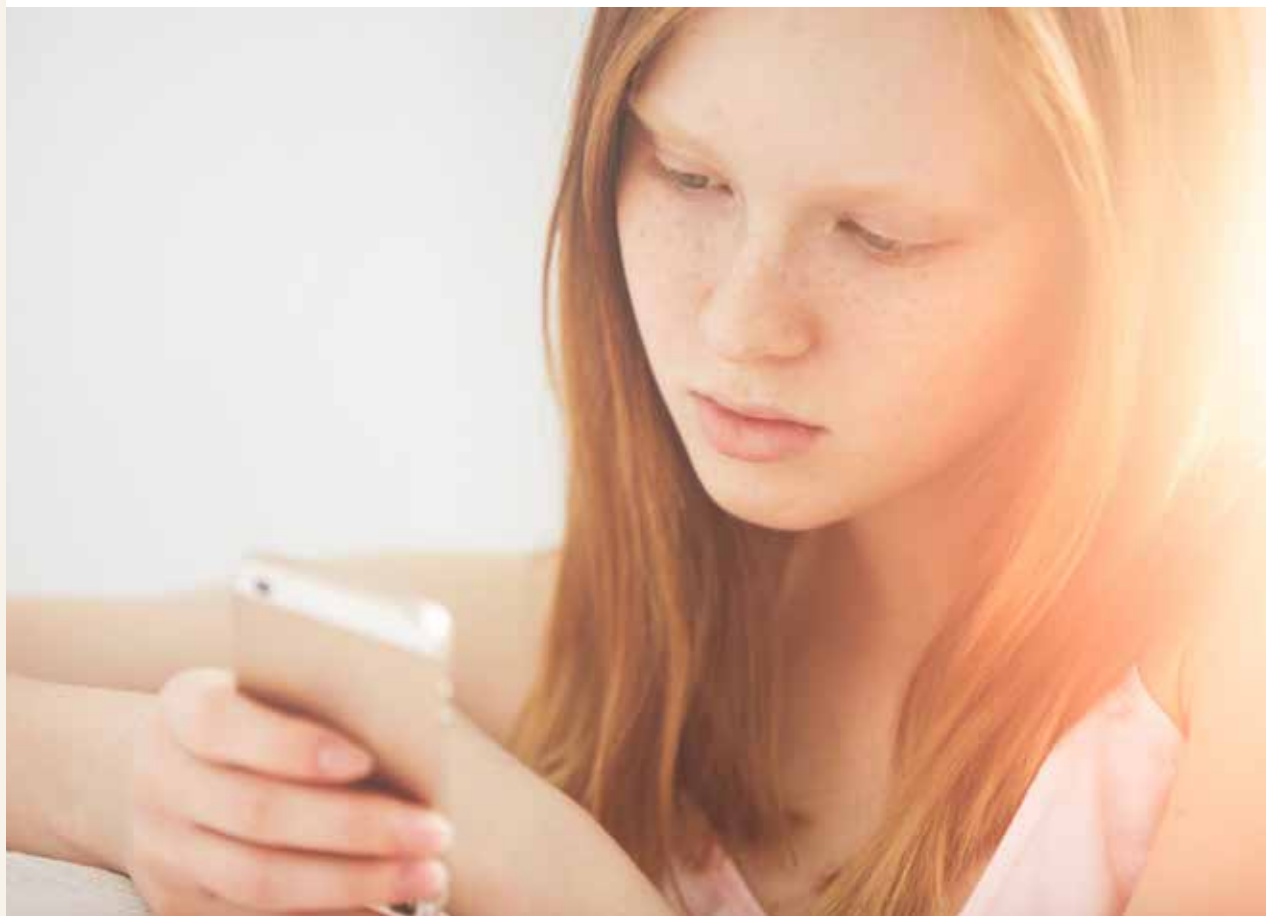
Until 1984, wireless technology was only used by the military. Now, in the US, there are 4.7 billion devices in use. Many now believe that mobile phones came to the market without enough safety testing. When we evolved on the planet, there were trace amounts of microwave radiation. Our bodies didn't evolve with it, and we have no protection against it. It's an invisible, but very real, environmental pollutant. EMF or electromagnetic fields, are invisible forms of energy often referred to as radiation. They are associated with the use of electrical power and various technologies, including wireless devices. As human beings, we are electrical in nature, and we are made of the same stuff as everything else: we are made of atoms. Atoms are made of electrons, which are negatively charged, and protons which are positively charged, and we react to electromagnetic fields, so it's not surprising we react to these things.

Most people are able to tolerate lower energy fields such as AM/FM radio, but increased exposure to the amount we are exposed to over time can be dangerous. As a society, we are very fond of things that make life easier or more enjoyable. This can cause us to ignore potential health effects. The research in this space is new, but compelling. In general, it's showing us that high artificial EMFs have been shown to disturb the human body's natural energetic field, leading to stress and fatigue, as well as DNA changes and degenerative diseases like cancer. So what can we do?

33 Take your phone out of your bedroom at night, and buy an old-school alarm clock to wake you up. This will lead to better sleep and give you a break from your device.

WIND DOWN

34 Many of us expect to be able to look at our phones and screens, go to bed and drop off instantly — this is unrealistic for the majority of us. To reduce the amount of mental and emotional stimulation before bed, have a 'no-tech 60-90 minutes before bed' rule. The blue-light that comes out of these devices can inhibit the production of the sleep hormone melatonin, which we need to have a deep, restorative sleep.



35 FIRST HOUR PHONE-FREE

Don't sabotage your day before it begins by looking through your phone first thing. Studies show us that doing this as soon as we wake, can trigger stress and anxiety. Instead, have a phone-free hour for the first hour of each day. Studies show that implementing this small habit change helps us to be less reactive at work, and with our loved-ones, too. Should we not be showering, dressing and eating for the first hour anyway?

36 Turning off your Wi-Fi at night helps to give your mind and body a break from the 24/7 exposure.

37 A website called *safespaceprotection.com* offers a wide range of products that can help to reduce EMF, using adaptors and other devices that offer an all-in-one solution for clearing and protecting an entire home, school, or office space from the harmful effects of EMF radiation.

38 Minimise your talk time, use earphones (not Bluetooth or wireless headphones) or use the speaker function, and try to eliminate any calls over 20 minutes long. Scientists have no idea how long you can safely talk on a mobile phone. And side effects such as headaches and dizziness have been observed after calls as short as two minutes. Another safety tip: alternate between one side of your head and the other from call to call, so you spread out the exposure.

39 Use antioxidant supplements to minimise radiation and other free-radical stress. Chlorella, high-quality algae, wheatgrass and green food supplements can all be helpful in protecting against radiation and reducing brain, body and adrenal stress.

40 'Small, sustainable changes will eventually add up to huge results' — Alison Canavan

41 A sea salt and soda bath is one of the most effective baths for detoxifying the body from chemicals and countering the effects of radiation. Use one pound of baking soda and one pound of sea salt in the bath, and soak for 20 to 25 minutes. Drink plenty of filtered water afterwards to help revitalise.

42 FUN FACT: THE SMELL OF ORANGES HAS BEEN SHOWN TO RELIEVE STRESS. USE ORANGE ESSENTIAL OIL AT HOME, OR IN A DIFFUSER, FOR A STRESS-FREE ATMOSPHERE.



43 Grounding. The earth has natural electromagnetic waves, so when we stand barefoot on the ground — sand, grass, soil or concrete are conductive surfaces — an energy exchange occurs. Think of yourself as a battery that takes in positive-charged free radicals from phones, Wi-Fi etc. Over time, your 'battery' loses power, so when you ground yourself, it helps you to recharge with negatively-charged electrons from the Earth. These neutralise the free radicals that cause inflammation and disease. Standing barefoot on the ground for as little as four minutes a day helps.

44 'Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself' — Rumi



MINDFULNESS

Since studying mindfulness at UCLA under some of the greatest teachers in this field — including Dan Siegal, Diana Winston, Professor Marvin Belzer, Susan Smalley and Matthew Brensilver — I now understand that living more mindfully is an incredible gift. The craze of mindfulness would lead you to believe that it's another added extra on your to-do list. However, the beauty of benefitting from living a more mindful life is when we learn to weave it into our everyday lives with little effort, helping us to see more clearly and take small moments often. For me, I see mindfulness as putting back into our lives what the digital age has taken out — natural mindful moments such as waiting for friends and walking, without being glued to a screen! As with all practices, they only work when we do them. Not when we read about them or talk about them or watch videos. The reason it's called a practice is because you have to show up and do it for it to work.

In UCLA, we define it as paying attention to present-moment experiences with openness, curiosity and a willingness to be with what is. That means accepting where and who we are in the moment without wanting it to be different. We often mourn for the past and long for the future. Very often our stress is caused by a long list of things we simply can't control, so bringing yourself into the present moment is really important. For me, this is the fundamental and most important aspect for people who are struggling. Your thoughts, intentions and actions in the present moment shape your future.

Accepting our emotions and being comfortable in our own skin is a struggle for most of us these days. We compare and contrast, and this often leaves us stressed and flustered about what we are not doing or, indeed, what we don't have.

45 I have created three meditations to go along with this article. They are free to download from my website ([see alisoncanavan.com](http://alisoncanavan.com)). They focus on releasing stress and accepting your emotions.

46 Mindfulness practice reduces activity in the part of the brain called the amygdala. The amygdala is central to switching on your stress response, so effectively, your background level of stress is reduced.

47 SET AN ALARM THREE TIMES A DAY

When your alarm goes off, get quiet and connect to your breath. To let go of fear and trust our intuition, we need to connect to the wisdom of the heart. To do this, we need to get quiet and go within.

48 *'Nothing brings suffering as does the untamed, uncontrolled, unattended and unrestrained mind. That mind brings great suffering'* — **The Buddha**

49 Develop better control over your thoughts. With practice, you can step back from your thoughts and not take them so literally. That way, your stress response is not initiated in the first place.

50 "We can accept where we are with grace through mindfulness, and begin to understand that the only place to start from is where you are, and not where you want to be" — **Alison Canavan**

51 Top and tail your day with presence, intention and gratitude. When you wake, say thank you, and set an intention for the day. It can be simple — "Today is a great day!" I like to say a prayer of thanks at night for all the blessings that day brought, too. These practices

are for people of all religions and none. Living from the heart is the strongest thread that binds and heals us all as humans.

52 *'The brain is like Velcro for negative experiences and Teflon for positive ones'* — **Rick Hanson**

53 Use my Stop-Catch-Challenge-Change technique. Stop yourself; catch the thought or emotion; challenge it by asking, "Is it true?" or tune into how you feel; and change your response to it. Often, we try to ignore our stressors, but what we need to do is, in fact, turn and face them. They need your awareness and attention.

54 Very few of us are taught that we need to work on ourselves and integrate body, mind and spirit to have true homeostasis; peace and freedom within. Mindfulness brings this awareness into our lives.

55 Journal your feelings, which will help to release emotions. Free-write about everything and anything that's bothering you.

56 Your focus improves with mindfulness practice — our work can improve as our focus does. Stress distracts and disrupts, so working with yourself can help you be less distracted.

57 Mindfulness can be done when standing, walking, sitting and lying down. Simply bring your attention into the present moment and connect with the breath. Taking small moments often is the key.

58 Build resilience by shifting your mindset using Notice-Shift-Rewire. Notice when you try to avoid certain events, experiences, or tasks as a way to steer clear of stress. Then shift by reminding yourself:

"Stress isn't bad. It's often both a pathway to remembering to notice [advancing your practice] and to growth." And, finally, rewire, by facing the stressors that arise in the course of life head-on, staying with whatever arises. Eric Langshur and Nate Klemp PhD are co-authors of the *New York Times* bestselling book *Start Here — Master the Lifelong Habit of Wellbeing*.

59 USE YOUR BREATH

Our breath is one of the most powerful tools we have — free and always accessible. Slow down and breathe in for the count of four and out for the count of four.

60 Try Dr Andrew Weil's 4/7/8 breath for stress and anxiety. [See drweil.com](http://drweil.com)

61 I find colouring-in incredibly therapeutic. The adult colouring books encourage you to focus and concentrate, which helps you practise mindfulness, because you are so involved in the colouring, you can't think about anything else. It very simply puts me in a mindful not 'mind-full' mood, and helps to calm me.

62 MANDALA JIGSAWS

The ancient art of Mandala is a powerful mindful practice that brings about utter stillness and serenity. Mandala jigsaws, created by artist Patricia Fitzgerald of Healing Creations, bring this age-old practice to modern life. Light a candle or incense, get comfortable, and simply allow yourself to get lost in this wonderfully therapeutic process. [See healingcreations.ie](http://healingcreations.ie)



63 Don't keep asking yourself: What's the matter? Ask: What's the opportunity?



Sunday Independent

EXCLUSIVE SUNDAY INDEPENDENT READER OFFERS

Cruise Holidays from Topflight

Discover Your Perfect Cruise Holiday Today.

A selection of our our wonderful Norwegian Cruise Line holidays.



NCL NORWEGIAN
CRUISE LINE®



HANDPICKED
ACCOMMODATION



FREE 20KG
BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE



FULLY
LICENSED & BONDED



100%
IRISH OWNED



INCLUDES PREMIUM ALL INCLUSIVE DRINKS PACKAGE

8 DAYS • ITALIAN CRUISE & STAY HOLIDAY ★★★★★

NCL Croatia & Greek Isles Fly & Cruise Venice.

Begin your incredible week of exploration on board the Norwegian Star. Be prepared to discover a wealth of history, culture and natural beauty as you visit some of the most beautiful places in Croatia and the Greek Isles.

Ports of Call

Venice, Italy • Kotor, Montenegro • Corfu, Greece
Santorini, Greece • Mykonos, Greece • Argostoli, Greece
Dubrovnik, Croatia • Venice, Italy

Your Holiday Includes

- ✓ Return flights from Dublin
- ✓ Return airport transfers
- ✓ 7 nights cruise ship accommodation
- ✓ Breakfast, lunch, evening meals and snacks on board
- ✓ All entertainment on board
- ✓ Premium All Inclusive drinks package
- ✓ Internet Package
- ✓ Onboard Credit
- ✓ Pre-paid gratuities

JUN - SEP 2019 FROM €1849PPS

Price based on 2 person sharing & departing from Dublin in September



INCLUDES PREMIUM ALL INCLUSIVE DRINKS PACKAGE

13 DAYS • ITALIAN CRUISE & STAY HOLIDAY ★★★★★

NCL Eastern Mediterranean Cruise & Stay Rome.

Begin your incredible week of exploration on board the Norwegian Spirit. Be prepared to discover a wealth of history, culture and natural beauty as you visit some of the most beautiful and inspirational places that the Eastern Mediterranean has to offer.

Ports of Call

Rome, Italy • Santorini, Greece • Athens, Greece • Mykonos, Greece
Rhodes, Greece • Crete, Greece • Valletta, Malta • Sicily, Italy
Naples, Italy • Livorno, Italy • Rome, Italy

Your Holiday Includes

- ✓ Return flights from Dublin
- ✓ Return airport transfers
- ✓ 10 nights cruise ship accommodation
- ✓ Breakfast, lunch, evening meals and snacks on board
- ✓ All entertainment on board
- ✓ Premium All Inclusive drinks package
- ✓ Internet Package
- ✓ Onboard Credit
- ✓ Pre-paid gratuities
- ✓ 2 nights accommodation in Hotel Veneto Palace, Rome

APR - MAY 2019 FROM €2399PPS

Price based on 2 person sharing & departing from Dublin in April



INCLUDES PREMIUM ALL INCLUSIVE DRINKS PACKAGE

14 DAYS • ITALIAN CRUISE & STAY HOLIDAY ★★★★★

NCL Croatia & Greek Isles Cruise & Stay Lake Garda.

This cruise takes you to some of the most beautiful locations around Italy, Croatia and the Greek Isles. And on board the Norwegian Star you will enjoy getting there as much as exploring each wonderful destination.

Ports of Call

Venice, Italy • Kotor, Montenegro • Corfu, Greece
Santorini, Greece • Mykonos, Greece • Argostoli, Greece
Dubrovnik, Croatia • Venice, Italy

Your Holiday Includes

- ✓ Return flights from Dublin
- ✓ Return airport transfers
- ✓ 7 nights cruise ship accommodation
- ✓ Breakfast, lunch, evening meals and snacks on board
- ✓ All entertainment on board
- ✓ Premium All Inclusive drinks package
- ✓ Internet Package
- ✓ Onboard Credit
- ✓ Pre-paid gratuities
- ✓ 6 nights accommodation at the Hotel Benaco, Lake Garda
- ✓ Topflight's expert rep service in Lake Garda

JUN - SEP 2019 FROM €2499PPS

Price based on 2 person sharing & departing from Dublin in September

Topflight

For more information on these **Reader Offers** call **01 240 1700**

ALL PRICES INCLUDE ✓ **FLIGHTS** ✓ **ACCOMMODATION** ✓ **CRUISE** ✓ **AIRPORT TRANSFERS** ✓ **20KGLUGGAGE ALLOWANCE**

All holidays are licenced by the Commission for Aviation Regulation under Licence Nos: TO 074 & TA 055



MOTHER NATURE

Mother Nature has incredible healing and de-stressing powers. Nature creates an internal settling that's almost like a natural Valium in an otherwise synthetic world. We might have forgotten, but our heart remembers. All she asks of you is that you spend time with her. When you do, she readily gives us her energy, all you need to do is receive. No matter what the season — whether you are enjoying the sun, playing in the leaves or making a snowman. All connection with nature gives you a sense of comfort, easing your worry and stress, and helping you to relax and think more clearly.

64 “Nature tops the list of potent tranquilisers and stress reducers. The mere sound of running water has been shown to lower blood pressure” — **Patch Adams**

65 When we spend time in nature, our intuition comes alive and it evokes a feeling hard to describe in words. In Japanese they have a word for it: *yugen*. *Yugen* gives us a profound sense of the beauty and mystery of the universe.

66 Do you work in an office or department store with bright lights? If so, you need daylight and nature to help keep your immunity and circadian rhythm in balance. So go outside during your break times.

67 *‘Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated’* — **Confucius**

68 In Japan, they have a practice called *Shinrin-Yoku*. *Shinrin* means ‘forest’ and *Yoku* means ‘bath’. It means bathing in the forest atmosphere, using all your senses — sight, sound, taste, smell and touch — to tune into Mother Nature. Spending a minimum of 30 minutes in a forest has incredible health benefits.

69 The biophilia hypothesis is the concept that humans have a biological need to connect with

nature. American biologist EO Wilson said: “We are hardwired to affiliate with the natural world — and just as our health improves when we are in it, so our health suffers when we are divorced from it.”

70 **CONTACT WITH NATURE IS AS VITAL TO OUR WELL-BEING AS DIET AND REGULAR EXERCISE**

71 **DIFFUSE ESSENTIAL OILS.** A study at the Department of Psychiatry at Mie University in Japan, has shown that the citrus fragrance of the phytoncide (natural oils within a plant) D-limonene is more effective than antidepressants for lifting mood. Try diffusing essential oils in your own home or workplace, to help with stress and energy levels. Lavender, lemon, orange, ylang ylang and bergamot are all wonderful to use.

72 **BREATHING IN MICROBES:** There is a common and harmless bacteria in the soil, *Mycobacterium vaccae*, which we breathe in when walking in the forest. It makes us feel happier, and its benefits were discovered by Dr Mary O'Brien, an oncologist at the Royal Marsden Hospital in London.

73 When outside, listen to the birds singing and the breeze rustling through the trees.



MOVEMENT

We all know that moving your body is great for so many reasons. It helps us to de-stress, reset, and it moves stagnant emotions around our body. E-motions are simply energy in motion. They are visitors passing through, and exercise helps to keep that passageway flowing.

74 Just do it, bring joy to it, and stop taking yourself so seriously. If we want to relieve stress with movement, we need to watch our attitude to exercise. If we constantly beat ourselves up for not doing enough, it can have a negative effect.

75 Exercise pumps up your endorphins and provides you with a physical outlet for frustrations and stress. Physical activity helps bump up the production of your brain's feel-good neurotransmitters, called endorphins.

76 Practice tai chi. It is an ancient form of martial art, and used in the Chinese belief system. The practice involves slow, graceful movements and rhythmic breathing. It can help to decrease your blood pressure, increase your muscle tone, flexibility and stamina.

77 Try some yoga. Yoga involves posturing and breathing techniques. This practice is from India, and the word ‘yoga’ means union. Yoga is a series of slow movements that are done along with meditation and breathing exercises. Doing these things together allows a settling of the body and mind.

78 Have a disco. Discos are fun and can help you shake and twirl off stress. So crank up the tunes and get moving!

79 **DON'T FORGET TO LAUGH**
I'm including this in movement because one of the best feelings in the world is the deep-rooted belly-laugh. Laughing reduces the level of stress hormones, and this reduction may result in higher immune-system performance. It also triggers the release of endorphins. So go to a comedy show or watch your favourite comedy on TV. Laugh with friends, too — it's free!

80 *‘My body needs laughter as much as it needs tears. Both are cleansers of stress’* — **Mahogany Silver Rain**

81 Studies show that walking for 30 minutes a day helps to decrease stress. Break it up with 15 minutes in the morning and 15 in the evening.



Dubai Holidays October to February

from **€869** pp (2 Persons Sharing)



Prices include: ✓ Direct Return Emirates Flights ✓ Accommodation as specified ✓ Checked in bags



Ramada Jumeirah Hotel
Dubai City
4 STAR | 2 PERSONS SHARING

5 Nights from **€869**pp
7 Nights from **€939**pp



Melia Dubai Hotel
Dubai City
5 STAR | 2 PERSONS SHARING

5 Nights from **€969**pp
7 Nights from **€1,139**pp



Bonnington Jumeirah Lakes Towers Hotel
Jumeirah Beach
5 STAR | 2 PERSONS SHARING

5 Nights from **€999**pp
7 Nights from **€1,139**pp



Lapita Dubai Park & Resort Autograph Collection Hotel
Dubai City
5 STAR | 2 ADULTS + 1 CHILD

5 Nights from **€2,699**pp
7 Nights from **€3,029**pp

Holidays are just a click away | Book today | 01 906 9560 | clickandgo.com

Prices are 'from' prices, based on select departure dates from Dublin & subject to availability. Prices are per person based on 2 sharing or Family of 2 adults + 2 children. €1 deposit with Aer Lingus flights only. Visit clickandgo.com for our T&C's. Fully licensed and bonded by CAR (TA 0700). E&OE.

Sunday Independent

WORK & CORPORATE STRESS



A little bit of stress in the workplace can help you stay focused, energetic, and able to meet new challenges. It's what keeps you on your toes during a presentation. Unfortunately for a lot of people, long hours, tight deadlines and ever-increasing demands can have significant health consequences, which range from the relatively benign — more colds and flus — to the more serious, such as heart disease and metabolic syndrome. So when you feel overwhelmed, worried and drained, what can you do?

82 STAY AWAY FROM CONFLICT

It takes a toll on your physical and emotional health, so it's a good idea to avoid it. However that's not always possible, so to mind your own mind and stress levels: don't gossip, steer clear of inappropriate office humour and don't share too many of your personal opinions about politics and religion.

83 Resolve conflict. Focus on the problem and not on the person, and ask to talk. Listen to the other person and try to find some common ground, avoiding accusations and blame. If this is not working, ask for someone to mediate.

84 Take brain breaks for better clarity, concentrations and mood. Take breaks from your desk every 45-50 minutes for five minutes, incorporating breathing, stretching, getting daylight and hydration.

85 Don't eat at your screen — and practice mindful eating. Take three deep breaths before eating to switch your body into 'rest and digest' mode, from the stress mode most of us are in. This will help you to digest your food, and absorb the essential nutrients you need.

86 Establish healthy boundaries. In a plugged-in world, it can be difficult to switch off, but it's important we do. If you are expected to keep on top of work-related email and updates after work hours, then face your fears and speak up, and come up with a compromise.

87 Don't over-commit; prioritise tasks; delegate responsibility and let go of perfectionism. No one can be everything and do everything, so take on what you can and ask for help with the rest.

RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNITY

Let's face it, relationships can be hard. Whether is a parent/child, friend, partner or work colleague, they all need work and time. However when we look at The Harvard study, which is almost 80 years old, it clearly proves that embracing community and our relationships helps us live longer, be happier and have less stress.



88 "Loneliness kills. It's as powerful as smoking or alcoholism." — **Robert Waldinger** (director of The Harvard Study.)

89 Talking to friends is a great stress-reliever. A problem shared is a problem halved, and when we talk about our feelings and life experiences, we feel held by a community, which helps to heal and reduce stress.

90 'Very few highly resilient people are strong in and by themselves. You need support' — **Steven Southwick**, Yale School of Medicine

91 Listen to each other. Communication is often the biggest stressor in a relationship. Very often people don't feel heard, and that includes children. We have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Try and be consistent and kind, and always be your authentic self.

92 FOOT RUB OR BATH If your partner is stressed and tired, ask if they'd like a neck or foot rub, or run them a soothing lavender bath with candles.

93 Join a local community group or sports club and get to know your neighbours. Check in on people and contact those you haven't seen in a while.

FINANCIAL

I brought Dave Kavanagh from financial companion (see financialcompanion.ie) into my Full 360 events, because in my coaching practice, I realised finance was a hidden stressor and one that caused a lot of emotional and physical dis-ease! It's often thought that simply having more money will solve the stress associated with 'money worries'. According to Dave, this is not necessarily the case, as constantly demonstrated by high-profile sports people or high-earning entertainers going bankrupt and facing difficulty, while there are relatively modest earners who are in control of their finances and not stressed about them. With everything you eat, everything you wear, where you live, and how you travel all connected to your finances, give them the time and attention they deserve.



94 Avoid avoiding and allocate some time. Spending some time reviewing your finances makes you more familiar with the activity, which eases the anxiety of not knowing exactly what is going on, and you will also spot fraud or bank errors sooner (yes, banks do make mistakes!)



95 When setting up direct debits or standing orders, don't set them up for the day you get paid. Allow for potential delays by scheduling them at least three days after payday. It vastly reduces the occurrences of 'unpaid' charges.

96 Examine three months' bank statements, and make sure you can account for every single transaction. This heightens spending awareness (that you can correct if necessary) and you can also identify items you should no longer be paying for.

97 Track your spending in detail for one month. It gives a true picture of your outgoings, putting you more in control.

98 Try to get in the habit of saving regularly. There will always be unexpected costs, and knowing you have something put aside prevents the stress of borrowing or going overdrawn.

99 Don't use your credit card if you have the money to spare. It's adding approximately 20pc to the balance each year if it's not cleared. **■**

I hope you have found some tips you can include in your daily life. Remember, what works for one does not work for another person, but you will never regret the time you spend improving both yourself and your life. Life is a gift, so treat it that way, and look upon the people around you as presents — so be present with them, laugh and have fun when you can. I'll leave you with this fun fact, right. For more information on my work, check out alisoncanavan.com

100
Holding hands and hugging those you love reduces your stress levels completely

Discover the wealth of good health at Vitality Expo, Ireland's largest health and well-being show, taking place in Dublin's RDS on September 8 and 9. Learn from the experts including Alison Canavan, Paul Byrne, Oliver McCabe and the Happy Pear, and enjoy two days of food, fitness, mindfulness and sustainability. For tickets, visit vitalityexpo.ie/tickets. Under-12s go free.





vitality expo

Presented by Health Stores Ireland
Your destination for healthy living

Sponsored by



Early Bird Offer

50% off tickets for a limited time.

To redeem simply go to vitalityexpo/tickets and enter the following code when checking out: **VITALITY50**.

A festival of food, fitness & fun

Vitality is Ireland's largest natural health and wellbeing show, taking place on **September 8th & 9th** in the **RDS Dublin**. Featuring some of Ireland's best-known speakers from the world of natural health, wellbeing and fitness, Vitality Expo promises to be a weekend full of nutrition, fitness, learning and fun.

8th & 9th Sept 2018
RDS Industries Hall
vitalityexpo.ie

Media Partner



Alison Canavan
Health & Wellness Coach



Dr. Patrick Holford
Nutrition & health expert



Siobhan Byrne
Director/Owner
BodyByrne Training



Oliver McCabe
Independent Irish
Healthfoods

Irish Independent

Sunday Independent

Independent.ie

