10 Practical Tips to De-Stress (That You're NOT Doing)

1) Track expenses for 3 months – THEN make a budget

One of the biggest areas of stress among people is money—and the lack thereof. And unfortunately, although people stress about it, very few actually do anything about it.

The problem I see with this is how people start trying to make a budget BEFORE they actually track where their money is going first.

So, before you start creating intentional steps to save money and manage your finances, I want you to do something first that likely NOBODY else has told you before and is why I think the majority of people fail when it comes to budgeting and managing their money.
What is that? I want you to simply track your finances by inputting your expenses in an excel spreadsheet each week for 3 months. That's it! Don't budget. Just track where everything is going.

This sounds time consuming right? Maybe. But I guarantee this will save you more time in the long run once you start to actually SEE and TRACK where your

money is going each week.

I also want you to make categories for your expenses so you can see how much adds up in each category. A few examples of this are: Utilities, Rent, Gas, Clothes, Groceries, Eat-Out, Starbucks, etc. Feel free to make your own categories and make them more specific when it comes to the "Extra's", such as your Starbucks runs or your entertainment expenses.

I will be blunt… at first, it's going to feel painful. Seeing where your money is going, especially when you see how much a few Starbucks coffee's adds up (ahem) is eye opening as you learn more about where your money is going. But what you're doing right now is a good thing— facing your fear and feeling the weight of what you buy and purchase (because likely they are going on a card where you don't physically see or feel the money leaving your wallet).

BUT, after 3 months you are going to have a very good idea of where your money is going and what money is coming in each month to enable you to create a better budget and cut back on the areas of your life that you need to cut back on in order to get ahead on your savings and finances. Then you will be able to make a more concrete budget that will actually work FOR you not against you.

2) Get Rid of the Clutter

Although we complain about this often, we tend to let clutter overwhelm our life without doing anything about it.

Not anymore.

Today, I want you to start making a list of areas of your life where you feel overwhelmed by the pile up or disorganization. Is it the mail? Kids papers or toys? The kitchen? Your office desk? Clothes all over the house? Shoes without a home?

After you have that list, I want you to focus on one of those areas each day or each week until you've attacked every area of your house that overwhelms you with clutter.

Here are my tips when it comes to certain areas of the house with clutter:

- Mail: have an unopened mail station and opened mail station
- Kids Toys/Paperwork: designate bins for this, or trash it.
- Kitchen: keep counter clutter to a minimum by creating a homes for things in cabinets.

- Office: Keep unorganized paperwork in folders to sort through later or designate more organizational storage spaces to free up the clutter.
- Clothes: consider the capsule wardrobe or picking items that coordinate with multiple things in your closet. Get rid of ANYTHING you haven't worn in at least 1 year.
- Shoes: Have a shoe bin or designated basket for shoes.

These are just a few suggestions for getting a handle on the clutter. But I assure you, once you start making time to unclutter, your stress will unclutter too.

3) Simplify Your Wardrobe

I know I already mentioned this briefly in the previous section, but most people still don't ever attack their wardrobe clutter and so this deserves a slot all on its own. I think the reason people don't want to attack this area is because it holds a lot of sentimental value when it comes to pieces that we have a hard time getting rid of. Or, it's so overwhelming that people shut down whenever they attempt to organize it.

But today, I want you to start by taking EVERYTHING out of your closet. Yes, everything.

Next, once you have it all removed, I want you to start

organizing those things into three piles:

1- LOVE
2- Maybe/Use infrequently
3- Haven't used in 1 year or more.

Put away ONLY the items you love, that fit well on you, that are your go-to items, that don't cause blisters on your feet, or don't have unsightly holes that you keep meaning to fix.

Then, go to the "Maybe/Use Infrequently" pile and figure out what you like about it. Do you like it but it only gets used infrequently during a certain season? Do you like it but it needs a small repair? Do you THINK you like it because it was expensive so you don't feel like you can part with it even though you don't love it? Carefully think through what items you might want to keep, then put them in a storage bin (Yes, storage bin… not your closet… at least not yet).

Finally, go to the "Haven't used in a year or more" pile. These are the things you need to get rid of, NOW! Period. Remember, you can ALWAYS get it again (but a better version of whatever it is that you're getting rid of). Now take a deep breath as you enjoy your simplified wardrobe with a whole new love for it!

4) Sticky Notes with Only 3 Things Per Day

I wrote a popular blog post about how I utilize one sticky note per day with only 3 items on it to help me stay organized and be productive on achieving my goals each day.

These 3 to-do's are my main priorities of the day that I have 100% focus on completing, even if I have 50 other things I need to do, these 3 to-do's are my first priority.

It's amazing how much better I feel and more productive I am when I attack those 3 to-do's first before anything else that day! Everything else becomes bonus check-off items if I complete them that day.

But by putting those 3 items first, typically the ones I've been putting off or are hanging over my head, it empowers me to get more done and enjoy the benefit of tackling those most important things first.

This will truly lead to less stress in your life as you end up being more productive with your time and getting those important things checked off.

5) Simple Meal Planning

Most people stress out when it comes to food planning (or the lack thereof).

But really, keeping it simple (at least for me) has been pivotal to helping me manage my meal planning better and more effectively.

I use simple ingredients and simple recipes each week to prevent the overwhelm of taking hours upon hours creating my meals. Although, there's nothing wrong with spending more time making good food, I have still been able to make healthy, wholesome food in 30 minutes or less from prep time to table.

I strongly recommend getting a meal planning app to help with this, or sign-up with one of those meal services that drop off healthy meals or ingredients for meals that you can whip up in a heart-beat.

If you're stressed about cooking, you're in good hands because there are so many alternatives and tools out there these days to help you cook good and healthy meals from home.

6) Make Time For Quiet (at least 15-30 min per day)

Do you make time for quiet in your schedule?

Most people don't. We live in a fast-paced society where times of stillness seems non-existent and non-productive.

But can I tell you something pivotal?

Creating times of stillness for me has been life-changing to helping me manage my stress levels better.

Even as a busy mom of three children, working from home, I still create time in my schedule for uninterrupted stillness and quiet. This helps keep me grounded and helps me hone in on what's most important instead of burning out or becoming busy but unproductive with my time.

So, try it!

Set aside some times of stillness in your schedule. Turn off your phone, just for 15 minutes. Breathe in. Write down your thoughts to purge your mind. This really does work to reduce stress, and yet, you're likely not doing it.

7) Say "NO" To One Thing Each Week

You heard me right.

I want you to practice the habit of saying "NO" to one thing each week.

Why? Because we have become a "YES" culture to TOO many things, overwhelming our schedules to the point of overarching stress.

And in actuality, you are probably doing the act of saying "NO" more than you think, but you don't realize it yet…

What I mean by this is that every "YES" to something or someone is a "NO" to something or someone else. Did you know that?!

But, it's more empowering when you say "NO" first instead of "YES," and then stress about it later. If you really don't know if you can commit, say "I DON'T KNOW" first and get back to them with a yes or no.

However, when you say "NO," something powerful happens.

You become less stressed as you remember that your

saying "NO" to working an extra hour is a "YES" to attend your child's birthday party.

Or your "NO" to hanging out with a friend (although fun) is a "YES" to spending time on your business that you already planned for that day.

Your "NO" to that candy is a "YES" to being healthy.

Your "NO" to doing the dishes is your "YES" to spending time in the quiet, reading your favorite book (which happens to be the best thing for you in that moment).

So, whether you're saying "NO" to dishes or saying "NO" to an actual person, remember to try and follow up with a thoughtful reason as to why you're telling them no so they don't take it personally (however, I'm pretty sure the dishes won't take it personally��).

8) Delete Social Media From Your Phone for 1 Month

Yep, I went there. And you're probably freaking out (especially if you're a millennial).

But, scientifically there's been evidence that being on social media for an hour or more each day causes more stress and depression in people than those that don't.

And quite frankly, even though we are stressed and depressed, for many of us, we can't imagine giving up social media for one month. It's like social suicide, right?

Well guess what can do (and should do)? Call your people.

Call those friends and catch up with them through a verbal conversation instead.

Write a letter to your grandparents who haven't heard from you in months or years.

Get together over coffee face-to-face instead of catching up with them over Facebook.

Be brave and take the leap. I've done this a few times and it has been absolutely life-changing to my stress and anxiety levels.

9) Cut the Guilt and Hire Help

We women think we are supposed to do it all.

But in actuality, we are meant to lean on each other. Or lean on another to help us out.

Maybe you need help with a cleaning service to come into your home once per month so you aren't scrubbing your baseboards until 1 in the morning?

Maybe you need help with laundry each week?

Maybe you need a counselor or mentor or coach to help you out so you can be healthy and achieve your goals?

Maybe you need help with someone watching your kids for a few hours each week so you can work?

For some of these things, it will require an investment. But I challenge you to get creative and find cheaper or free ways of getting the help you need.

Perhaps you can have your friend do carpool runs to pick up and drop off kids?

Perhaps you can learn what you need to learn through YouTube videos created for free online helping you with

certain technical problems instead of hiring someone?

Think outside the box and remember, you're not meant to do it all alone.

10) Remove "I Can't" From Your Vocabulary And Exchange With "I Can!"

This may sound cheesy, but practicing healthy mindset principles actually DO work to reducing stress in your life.

The number one thing I've found most people say to themselves which causes more stress in their life is saying "I can't" to difficult situations.

"I can't… create a budget."
"I can't… get a handle on my clutter."
"I can't… simplify my wardrobe."
"I can't… make time for quiet."
"I can't… hire help."

When you mentally tell yourself over and over again that you can't with something, you're feeding your mind with a negative energy which is more powerful than you think.

BUT, when you feed yourself with POSITIVE energy through a positive word such as "I can," you're more likely to overcome the difficult situation or the seemingly impossible situation more successfully and with less stress!

So, tell yourself right now…

"I CAN… create a budget and get a handle on my finances."
"I CAN… get a handle on my clutter."
"I CAN… _____ (fill in the blank).

Whatever you put your mind to, you become. Whatever you believe, you will be. So remove "I can't" and start embracing the powerful word of "I can!"