



Thirty Nine Ways to Lower Your Cortisol.

By Lisa Chance, Community Coach



I've been researching this for several months and have also implemented most of these and found them helpful.

I originally posted 30 ways and shared it in one of Coach Terri's groups. I've added to it since then, so thanks to those members who have added to this list.

Over time, high cortisol levels can lead to weight gain, high blood pressure, diabetes, fatigue and difficulty concentrating, to name but a few. To counter this, think of how many of the things listed below that you do right now and increase the instances by two or more.

1. **Meditation.**
2. **Yoga.**
3. **Stretching.**
4. **Tai Chi.**
5. **Pilates.**
6. **Labyrinth walk.**
7. **Getting a massage.**
8. **Gardening (light).**
9. **Gentle dancing (like Nia) to soothing or positive music.**
10. **Take up a hobby, one that is quiet and rewarding.**
11. **Coloring for pleasure.**
12. **Spent five minutes practicing your three-part breathing.**

- 13. Have a consistent sleep schedule.**
- 14. Listen to relaxing music.** (No wine involved!)
- 15. Spend time laughing and having fun with someone.** (No food or drink involved.)
- 16. Interact with a pet.** (It also lowers their cortisol level, too.)
- 17. Learn to recognize stressful thinking and begin:**
 - a.** To train yourself to be aware of your thoughts, breathing, heart rate and other signs of tension helps you recognize stress when it begins.
 - b.** By focusing on awareness of your mental and physical state, you can become an objective observer of your stressful thoughts, instead of a victim of them.
 - c.** Recognizing stressful thoughts allows you to formulate a conscious and deliberate reaction to them. A study of 43 women in a mindfulness-based program showed the ability to describe and articulate stress was linked to a lower cortisol response.



- 18. Prayer:** For those with spiritual inclinations, developing faith and participating in prayer can help control cortisol.
- 19. Prayer or Kindness:** Whether you're spiritual or not, performing acts of kindness can also improve your cortisol levels.
- 20. Forgive someone.** Even (or especially?) yourself.
- 21. Practice mindfulness.** Whenever you are mindful and in the present moment, you reduce your cortisol level. Especially try to practice mindfulness when you eat.
- 22. Drink black and green tea:** A study of 75 men found 6 weeks of drinking black tea decreased cortisol in response to a stressful task, compared to a different caffeinated drink (73Trusted Source).
- 23. Probiotics and prebiotics:** Probiotics are friendly, symbiotic bacteria in foods such as yogurt, sauerkraut and kimchi. Prebiotics, such as soluble fiber, provide food for these bacteria. Both probiotics and prebiotics help reduce cortisol. (Be sure it is sugar-free!)
- 24. Take fish or krill oil.**
- 25. Make a gratitude list.**
- 26. Take magnesium.**
- 27. Try Ashwagandha,** which is an Asian herbal supplement used in traditional medicine to treat anxiety and help people adapt to stress.
- 28. Getting bright sunlight** or exposure to a light-box within an hour of waking up (great for fighting SAD as well).
- 29. Avoiding blue light at night** by wearing orange or amber glasses if using electronics after dark. (Some sunglasses will work.) Have lamps with orange bulbs (such as salt lamps) in each room and turning those on instead of bright overhead lights after dark.
- 30. Maintain healthy relationships.**
- 31. Let go of guilt.** Feelings of shame, guilt or inadequacy can lead to negative thinking and elevated cortisol.



32. Drink water!!! Stay hydrated! Dehydration increases cortisol. Water is great for hydrating while avoiding empty calories. A study in nine male runners showed that maintaining hydration during athletic training reduced cortisol levels.

33. Tapping.

34. Stand tall. Standing tall for just two minutes can lower your cortisol by 25 per cent, according to a famous study led by Harvard social psychologist Amy Cuddy.

35. Acupuncture.

36. Forest Bathing (shinrin-yoku). [Characterized by visiting a forest and breathing its air.] {See article referenced below.}

37. Listening to Binaural Beats.

38. Grounding or "Earthing." Yes, it definitely lowers cortisol. Also, purchasing a grounding mat - and going out into the garden barefooted every other day - has made a tremendous improvement to my length of sleep and the quality of my sleep. Here is a link to one of the research articles:

[The Biologic Effects of Grounding the Human Body During Sleep as Measured by Cortisol Levels and Subjective Reporting of Sleep, Pain, and Stress.](#)

And here is the movie, which is also available

via Amazon Prime: [The Earthing Movie: The Remarkable Science of Grounding \(full documentary\)](#) 3

39. I have found several articles on rocking chair reducing cortisol levels; here are three of my favorites:

[A Chair That Can Help You Heal?](#) 1 - From Farmers' Almanac

[How a rocking chair can help you heal.](#) - from Body & Soul (Australia)

- taps into the parasympathetic nervous system; this sedative side of the nervous system and therefore good for pain management
- repetitive action of using a rocking chair helped ease anxiety and depression, improve balance and reduce the need for pain medication
- recovery from major surgery - easing lower back pain, constipation, abdominal pain from C-sections and bowel dysfunction following surgery
- vertigo
- increased mobility
- percentage by which symptoms of anxiety and depression MAY be relieved by using a rocking chair = 30%

Also, from "Can controlled vestibular stimulation reduce stress (1).pdf" - Little Flower Medical Research centre (LFMRC), Angamaly, Kerala, India "The need for vestibular stimulation can be observed throughout the life from newborns and infants in the cradle to the aged in a rocking chair. Rocking is soothing because it is similar to the movements in utero."

Do you have something else to suggest? I'll be glad to research it.

BONUS: A way to make your cortisol fluctuate (which is what you want it to do) is to end your shower or bath with a minute (or three) under the cold water.