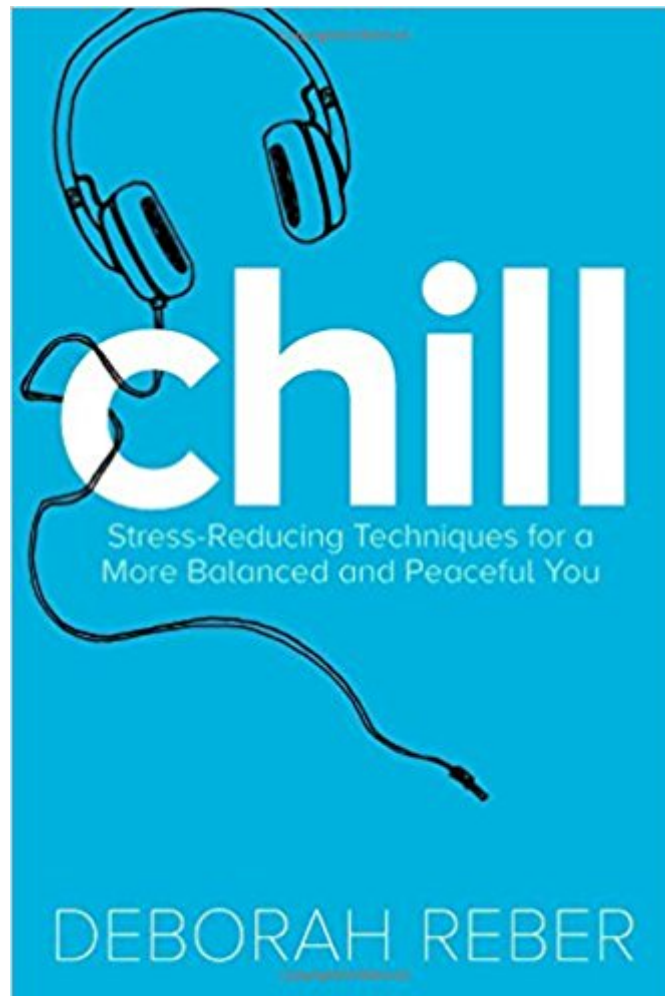




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Chill: Stress-Reducing Techniques For A More Balanced, Peaceful You



Synopsis

Feeling overwhelmed? This easy-to-follow guide to stress management is the perfect solution for teens in desperate need of downtime. With schedules packed full of obligations ranging from academic to athletic to social, today's teens know all too well the heavy toll that stress can take. And with the ever-present pull of technology, the idea of unplugging feels practically impossible. But there's a way to relax without sacrificing productivity, and we will show you how. Explore a variety of techniques—including time management, visualization, exercise, and other creative outlets—that can take away tension and help organize your life. From de-cluttering your desktop to declining unimportant invites, the info, insight, and tools offered in we will leave you with less stress, more happiness, and a blissfully balanced life. So take a deep breath, get ready to feel better, and we will.

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Customer Reviews

Deborah Reber's teen books include we, we, we, we, and we. She is also the founding editor-in-chief for Heart of Gold, an online destination for teen girls passionate about entrepreneurship, social activism, and volunteerism. She recently moved to Amsterdam with her family. Find out more at DebbieReber.com.

Chill 2> 2> Stress seems to be on just about everyone's minds these days. I get tons of e-mails and letters from teen girls sharing their personal tales of stress and angst in their lives. So how do you define stress? Stress is the feeling you get when you're taking on too much, or people are demanding on you too much. "ZOE, AGE 17 I would define stress as being overwhelmed with a certain problem or person. "ALIA, AGE 16 Stress is tension, whether emotional or physical. You can be stressed out about friendship troubles, or you can be stressed out about lack of sleep. You can get impatient in a long line at the grocery store, or your body can be stressed out by overexerting yourself in an exercise or sport. "GWYN, AGE 15 All great definitions. Here's how the American Academy of Pediatrics defines stress: "[Stress is] the uncomfortable feeling you get when you're worried, scared, frustrated, or overwhelmed. It is caused by emotions, but it affects your mood and your body." That definition might be straightforward enough, but stress sure doesn't feel straightforward to deal with. Yes, it's a normal part of life, but that doesn't mean it won't take a toll. Let stress run rampant and your mind, body, and soul will pay the price.

3> Have you ever been in a situation where you went from calm to terrified in a split second? Maybe you were jolted awake in the middle of the night by a suspicious noise coming from inside your house. Or maybe you stepped into a busy intersection just as a car darted out of nowhere and narrowly missed hitting you. Maybe you were water-skiing, and, as you waited for the boat to swing around and pick you up, your mind turned to the movie Jaws, and you nearly freaked out big-time. When you're thrust into a situation that feels dangerous, scary, or potentially life-threatening, your body switches to autopilot, and your nervous system takes over. Once your brain makes an internal announcement that something is wrong, your body responds by automatically releasing the hormone adrenaline into the blood stream. That's when the party really gets started. The adrenaline affects you by:

- increasing your heart rate (so you can take in more oxygen in case you need to run or exert yourself)
- raising your blood pressure (a result of your heart beating faster and your blood vessels constricting)
- sending more blood to your muscles so you'll be ready to react quickly and with power

Your body also releases cortisol, another hormone that works with adrenaline to:

- give you a quick burst of energy
- improve your memory
- increase your ability to withstand pain

If you've ever experienced a surge of adrenaline, or an adrenaline rush, you might have noticed that things suddenly appeared to be happening in slow motion. Maybe you felt a rush of blood to your arms, legs, hands, or feet. Or maybe you broke out in a sweat, or suddenly felt shaky and nauseous. These are all classic symptoms of the fight-or-flight response, a subconscious preparation by your body to do what it takes to stay and fight or turn and run to survive any situation. They are also the classic symptoms of what we

call stress. In emergencies, stress can be a good thing. It's a survival tool, and a pretty efficient one at that. Stress isn't always a negative in your day-to-day life, either. It's stress that gives you that extra oomph while you're playing in the state soccer tournament, or when you're pushing to meet an impossible deadline. Small amounts of stress can keep you on your toes and push you to perform at your highest level. But what happens when you're dealt too much? 3> Just as your body's stress responses switch on during an emergency, they're supposed to switch off once the crisis has passed. Your heart rate should go back to normal, the sweating should stop, and the queasy feeling in your stomach should vanish. But the problem comes in when your body repeatedly gets tricked into responding to stresses that aren't life threatening. Anxiety about next week's midterm can trigger the same fight-or-flight response as a serious threat. But since you don't actually need your survival hormones to get through your midterm, you're left with extra adrenaline and cortisol hanging around. The result? Chronic stress. Your body starts exhibiting classic stress symptoms all the time. Instead of giving you a boost to power through an emergency, the stress starts wearing you down. And that's when the trouble begins. 3> Being seriously stressed out can cause all kinds of not-so-pleasant side effects, including: trouble sleeping trouble tense muscles and muscle pain stomachaches, digestion problems, and/or constipation headaches, including migraines irritability and moodiness feeling down about everything impaired cognitive functioning unexpected emotional outbursts (such as crying or laughing for no reason) an irregular heartbeat or rapid heart rate lowered immunity (being more susceptible to illness or rashes) difficulty concentrating acne Dealing with even one of these symptoms on a regular basis would wreak havoc on your peace factor. And when your stress runs rampant, it's also potentially damaging to your long-term health. Overstressed teens are at a much higher risk for developing depression, panic or anxiety disorders, and drug abuse problems as adults. 3> Once you buckle up for a ride on the stress roller coaster, it can sometimes be hard to climb off. Here's an example of how stress feeds on itself in a vicious cycle: You feel anxious about something → you lose sleep → you're constantly tired → you rely on sugar and caffeine to perk you up → you become nutritionally imbalanced → you lack the energy to do anything about what you originally felt anxious about → you feel more anxiety and stress (and back to the beginning again) You've probably already come up with some healthy ways to release your stress, but sometimes you might be coping in unhealthy ways too → getting into fights or lashing out at parents and friends, keeping your emotions and anxieties bottled up inside, bullying other people, or experimenting with drinking, doing drugs, engaging in risky sexual behavior, or cutting. You can't always control the stressful situations that life throws

your way, but you can control how you deal with your stress. To find your best stress solution, you need to figure out what it is you're so stressed out about in the first place. Read on to find out what teens everywhere say are their biggest stress sources. Chances are, you'll realize you're not alone.

WHAT'S YOUR SECRET FOR STOMPING OUT STRESS? I write a lot of poetry and songs to relieve my stress. . . it helps to get everything out. "DEVIN, AGE 15 My technique for relieving stress is running on the treadmill and listening to my favorite music. Also, just reading a book or magazine while listening to music is stress-relieving for me. "SAMANTHA, AGE 16 I've kept diaries since I was eight years old, and I write almost every night. It relaxes me and helps me fall asleep. "ABIGAIL, AGE 18 I make sure I have alone time. "ALYSSA, AGE 16

TIME-OUT: FACING THE FUTURE During the writing of this book, the US was slowly crawling its way out of a recession. The job market, especially for entry-level positions, is particularly tight, even with a four-year college degree, and students are drowning in loan debt that makes it more and more difficult for them to have a decent standard of living as young, independent adults. There's no way to predict what will happen with the job market and economy in years to come, but the not knowing can be just as stressful, especially for teens looking ahead to what's next. The truth is, it can be hard to dream big when everywhere you turn there's a reminder about just how hard things can be. It's enough to make even the most self-possessed, optimistic girl have a bit of a meltdown.

LET IT GO There are many strategies to help you deal with future stress freak-outs, but the most powerful one is to let go of what you can't control. Remind yourself that what happens in the future is no more in your control than whether or not it's going to rain Sunday or which numbers will be drawn in the next Mega Millions lottery. By holding on to worry and stress over the "what ifs" (What if I can't find a job? What if my career dreams don't pan out? What if the economy tanks again and I have to live at home until I'm thirty?), you're essentially trying to control the future, as if your anxiety is actually a super power you can use to will the future to align with what you want. Um, that doesn't work. In fact, as I write in chapter eight, dwelling on fear and negativity can actually bring more fear and negativity into your life. And that's pretty much the opposite of what we're going for when it comes to reducing stress. So, let it go. And yes, I'm aware this is one of those easier-said-than-done kind of situations. So here are some more tips to make letting it go easier and, as a result, bring you more peace about what's to come: Stay in the here and now. Since the past has already happened and can't be changed, and the future is a great big unknown, the best bet to experiencing more peace in your life is to stay in the present. How you choose to feel and what you choose to do in this moment is really the only thing completely within your control. To stay in the here and now, really be in it, whatever

• is. If you're baking cookies, enjoy all the smells and tastes and textures that go along with that. If you're dodging puddles in a cross-country meet, think about how your body feels as it glides down the path. When you find yourself spinning off into future unknowns, snap yourself back to the present. Go back to gratitude. As I write in chapter seven, gratitude is a great way to bring attention to what is working in your life instead of focusing on what isn't or dwelling on unknowns that might feel big and scary. The simple act of taking five minutes to appreciate even little things you are grateful for can result in an instant mind shift. Get inspired by others. Read the memoirs and biographies of people who've overcome challenges in their lives and gone on to accomplish incredible things. Not only will this help you reset your perspective, but it will give you a burst of inspiration and the reminder that you can do anything you set your mind to. Be curious. Turning your worry into curiosity will transform the energy surrounding your thoughts about the future. Curiosity is about things like possibility, unlimited options, and what could be. And unlike the heavy anxiousness of worry, curiosity is light and exciting and hopeful. So instead of thinking thoughts like, I'm worried I won't reach my future dreams, think I'm so curious to see where my passions and interests take me! And lastly. . . Remember that you are creative, resourceful, and whole. It's true. You have what it takes to create whatever you want to create with your life. Trust in yourself and in your ability to make smart choices and figure it out as you go along.

The title and cover of this wonderful book are a bit misleading. At first glance you might think it's about tension reducing techniques such as meditation, or listening to music. Instead you will find a book about how to get organized, how to say no to the things that are not important, and how something like journaling can not only help you organize your thoughts, it can help you express those feelings that build up inside you. While the book is written for teen girls, the advice would work for boys (not to mention adults).

Stress isn't a condition reserved solely for adults. Everyone experiences stress, from a grade school student worrying about a quiz in math class to a high school teen trying to figure out how they're ever going to survive school long enough to make it to college. And adults -- well, adults might have more stress, but they can't claim they're the only ones who do. Author Deborah Reber breaks stress down and makes it a bearable condition in CHILL. First, we find out what stress is. Then, we learn how we can, if not get rid of it completely, at least make it bearable. There are sections of the book dedicated to taking action: getting organized, learning to manage your time, realizing that it's okay to

say "no." Then we learn the basics of looking out for ourselves: creating a support network of family and friends, and gaining perspective into the fact that sometimes we're going to need other people's help in getting over whatever it is that's bothering us. Then there's my favorite part, that of turning in and getting physical: learning that nutrition and exercise can help balance out our stressful lives, figuring out do-it-yourself strategies that can help in just about any situation, and even the importance of writing things down in a journal. We might not be stressing every day of our lives, but there will always be times when we do. And when that happens, be thankful that you have a book like CHILL to remind you of what's important -- taking time for you! Reviewed by: Jennifer Wardrip, aka "The Genius"

As exams approach at a breakneck pace and all those deadlines loom ominously over your head, you may find yourself more stressed than ever. We've all heard the stories, the advice, and the do's and don'ts. But what it usually comes down to is cramming everything that needs to get done in as short of a time as possible, because let's face it: your technique works. Well, sort of. In *Chill*, Reber offers a practical, sensitive, and very down to earth advice that can be of use to anyone. She knows that teens live in a world where the competition for everything--from yearbook mock elections to spots in college--is tough, and what's more, she empathizes and doesn't try to talk down to her readers. Instead, she asks the questions that matter to determine just how much stress you add on to your life, and offers up sensible ideas to help keep you organized and relaxed--with minimal effort, and in easy to adopt practices. From tips on how to de-clutter your hard drive to ways to organize your social life, Reber's advice will motivate and inspire to do more than just get it done, but get it done in a laid back and relaxed fashion.

Chill: Stress-Reducing Techniques for a More Balanced, Peaceful You by Deborah Reber is a great non-fiction pick for teens. *Chill* talks about different causes of stress, like homework, parents, friends, and getting into college, and ways to relieve or minimize that stress, such as journaling and talking to others. It also discusses time management, organization, even exercise and nutrition. Readers will come away from *Chill* with plenty of positive thoughts and new ways to de-stress. The book never feels clinical or dry. The author never talks down to readers, nor does she try to talk like them and be uber-hip. The writing is straightforward and positive throughout the book. Even though this book was written for teens, adults should check it out as well. *Chill* isn't just about high school worries - there are plenty of other sections from which grown-up multi-taskers could greatly benefit as well. For example, *Chill* encourages people to recognize the need to take

time for oneself. It's okay to take a breather now and then, even when and especially when you have a busy schedule! When you get Chill, also pick up a new journal and some new pens. You'll be making organized lists and journal entries before you know it!

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