

# One Week to Stress Less

SURE, IT WOULD BE GREAT TO SPEND A WEEK AT CANYON RANCH, NIBBLING RAW ALMONDS AND PRACTICING OUR OMS. BUT IN THE REAL WORLD, FINDING INNER PEACE CAN BE MORE CHALLENGING. HERE ARE SEVEN EASY CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE RIGHT NOW THAT WILL HELP TAKE THE EDGE OFF

## DAY 1 Go green (tea, that is)



We know, you have a bit of a latte problem. But tomorrow, why not try replacing your java with green tea? While coffee causes your body to produce more of the stress hormone cortisol, tea has the opposite effect (thanks to the calming amino acid theanine). And don't be shy about downing multiple cups. In a study of more than 42,000 people, Japanese researchers found that those who drank five cups of green tea per day felt less anxious than those who had less than one cup.

## DAY 2 Swap pills for push-ups

Better than Prozac? Perhaps ... Studies show that regular exercise improves mood as well as, if not better than, medication. "You simply can't beat or mimic the effect of exercise," says integrative health expert Dr. Frank Lipman. Loathe breaking a sweat? Grab a couple of 5-pound weights: Research confirms that strength training relieves anxiety too.



**REEBOK CROSSFIT** Nano U-Form training shoes, \$120; reebok.com.

## DAY 3 Bathe before bed



**AVEDA STRESS-FIX** Soaking salts, \$40; aveda.com.

Make it your new pre-bedtime ritual, complete with lavender-scented bath salts, chamomile tea (another proven stress buster), and the Relaxing Sounds of Nature app (\$1; available on iTunes), which includes breaking waves or crickets among other settings. "A hot bath relaxes muscles and eases tension," says Dr. Mark Hyman of the Institute for Functional Medicine. "Raising your body temperature also helps induce sleep."

## DAY 4 Suffer, just a little

It doesn't look comfy, does it? But believe it or not, a few minutes spent lying on the prickly mat below is designed to make you feel good. "The sharp prongs strike a balance between pain and pleasure," says Equinox's Geryllyn Coopersmith. "These 'hedonic points' activate the production of endorphins and oxytocin, hormones that can ease discomfort and give you a sense of physical well-being."



**ACUMAT** Acupressure mat, \$40; stylewellness.com.

## DAY 5 Turn on, tune out



**STUDIO BEATS BY DRE** Headphones, \$300; beatsbydre.com.

The next time you get a 10-minute back rub, bring headphones. "This heightens the relaxation experience and helps you block out the noise around you," says massage therapist Ben Brown, who dreamed up the new Rhythm and Bliss massage at Bliss Spa. Load up your iPod with this soothing mix created by Brown.

**TOUCH TONES**  
"Skinny Love," Birdy  
"Falling, Catching," Agnes Obel  
"Everything," Ben Howard  
"Gravity," Jamie Woon  
"Riverside," Agnes Obel  
"Slow," Rumer  
"Daydreamin'," Porsche Smith  
"Forget Me Not," Lucie Silvas  
"Hate & Love," Jack Savoretti  
"Vete," Marlango  
"Full On," Rachael Yamagata

## DAY 6 Drink up

Even mild dehydration can make you moody, according to a recent report. Just a 1 percent dip—from, say, a hard workout—can deplete your water stores, and you often don't notice until you're already dehydrated, finds physiologist Lawrence Armstrong, who helped lead the study. To make your daily H<sub>2</sub>O intake more enticing, add lemon, cucumbers, or fresh mint, and keep a pitcher wherever you spend most of your time.



## DAY 7 Embrace the blues



**MOOD-LITES** Lightbulb, \$6; lowes.com.

We all agree that fluorescent lights are depressing. But even your standard incandescents could use a makeover, says Colorexpert.com's Leatrice Eiseman. "Try blue. It's a calming color." Another good option? Full-spectrum bulbs. "They expose you to wavelengths of light you might be missing if you don't get outside much," says Dr. Lipman. "You'll have more energy and sleep better too."