

# Four Ways

## to Enjoy a **Stress-Free** Summer

—claritychi.com



### The Arrival of Sweet Summertime

All winter long we await that **free, soul-on-fire, thrive vibe** of the summer season. Summer has long been a **time to reset** for the busy months ahead. With only the best intentions and so much on our plate, many of us let these three amazing months pass by without experiencing all they have to offer.



Let's dive into 4 important stress free summer (not-so-secret) secrets...



#1

Often considered “the best medicine” having fun is an important part of living a stress free life. Ironically, when it comes to our busy schedules packed with responsibility, fun is not usually top on our priority list. Participating in activities we consider to be fun helps us to let loose while relieving us of the burdens day to day responsibilities bring. Fun has been proven to ease our minds, strengthen relationships, encourage a positive attitude, and buffer burnout.

Summer fun is a phrase for a reason. So say yes! All summer long. Choose to pencil it in. After all, there is no need to miss brunch on the patio of our favorite restaurant, dinner on the riverwalk at sunset, or another perfect summer day on the boat because now we know it is important to our health!

*Pro tip: Laughter is what fun is made of. That hot new series on Netflix that gets you rolling. It counts.*



We all know rest is an important part of living a balanced and healthy life. Studies show that giving your mind and body this much needed reprieve helps with everything from anxiety, brain fog and your cardiovascular health. Remember, there is no “right” way to rest. Simple things like slowing down when you are tempted to rush, playing one of those brain exercise games on your break, or jotting down your fast moving thoughts in a journal all promote rest.

That being said, there is no other season like summer to take advantage of relaxation. Think about it. It's practically built in! So do yourself a favor, have a few weekend getaways, spend a few hours at the pool relaxing or reading a good book. Summer is when we can give ourselves guilt free permission to relax!

*Pro Tip: Purchase a hammock. Hang hammock between two trees providing shade. Nap in said hammock.*





# EXERCISE

#3

Participating in regular exercise increases those little feel good bubbles in our brains called endorphins. Endorphins help improve quality of sleep, act as natural pain killers, and elevate our mood. As expected, all of these result in a decrease of overall stress. Don't be fooled, you don't have to lock yourself in the gym for three hours to get these great benefits.

A variety of studies show that spending time in nature can be rejuvenating and aid in stress reduction. Activities such as gardening, long walks in the

park while catching up with a friend, family bike rides, or that outdoor yoga class you keep passing while running errands on Saturday afternoons are all great ways to boost your endorphins.

Summer is one of the best seasons to introduce regular exercise into your weekly routine as there are many more options in the warmer months.

*Pro tip: Take a morning walk before 10 am. UV rays are strongest from 10 am until 4 pm. Chances are you won't need sunscreen early morning allowing you to soak up some vitamin D in the process!*



The food we choose to fuel our bodies has a large impact on the way we feel. Not only do poor food choices affect our body by making us feel sluggish and tired, food also affects our mood and stress levels. Cortisol, the stress hormone secreted by our adrenal glands, increases when we ingest high levels of processed sugar and fat. When we have high levels of cortisol for extended periods of time, we crave sugar and fat!

The trick to this ugly stress cycle is to incorporate healthful, whole, in season foods. Replacing one standard

American meal a day with fresh whole foods has been shown to minimize cortisol levels. Thankfully, summertime gives way to farmers markets and local produce at our grocery stores. It's hard to beat a fresh ear of corn at a summer BBQ or a slice of watermelon at the pool on a hot summer day.

*Pro tip: Wash fruits and vegetables and put them in glass tupperware in your fridge. Easy access makes healthy snacking a breeze and prevents you from finding that moldy bag of cherries you forgot about in your produce drawer.*





## Try Them Out, You Have Nothing to Lose!

So often we skim over simple answers for stress because they are just that, **simple**! By implementing each of these not-so-secret summer **secrets** into our weekly schedule, we will be sure to experience the **stress-free** summer we've been dreaming of! As it only takes 60 days to form a habit, our stress-free summer plan will set us up for **success** in the months to come.

So what  
are you  
waiting for?!  
Dive in!