

## Women's Issues Essay

### Fighting Tension and Stress

As the end of the year and the holidays are approaching, I have noticed a lot more tension to get goals accomplished and from family obligations looming nearer and nearer. I am writing about what works for me to combat the tension and stress. I hope some will find it helpful.

With the arrival of winter, I find that my mood gets down. It can be difficult to get out of my chair. What has worked for me is to get bundled up and step outside and take some deep breaths of the fresh air. Look around you and see what beauty you can see in nature. It is a natural mood booster. I have a dog, Harriet, that does her business outside and that forces me to get some fresh air. Walking around outside is just a bonus. Now I am not telling you to get a pet, but it helps me to have someone to take care of.

I have noticed more tension in my neck and shoulders. They are very sore most every morning. Muscle aches can bring me down too. Stretching in the morning while sitting on the side of my bed helps get me moving. Stretch my arms to the sky a few times, roll my shoulders, twist at the waist to touch the pillow behind me, touch my toes, make circles with my ankles and march in place. That's all it takes to get started.

I have started exercising. I set a goal for myself to walk 4000 steps per day. I have found that doing at least 2000 steps first thing in the morning help in achieving my goal of 4000 steps. I have noticed my joints and muscles are less sore. The point is I HAVE TO MOVE. To accomplish this, it is difficult because I am very proficient at procrastination, as soon as I wake up enough to get my morning constitution completed, I start walking inside my house. The nice thing is, I don't have to walk fast or do all of it at once. I start at my normal walking pace and if I get short of breath or my legs get tired, I slow down or stop and rest. I have a path from the kitchen to the front door that is 25 steps, so a full lap is 50 steps, so 20 laps would be 1000 steps. If I get 2 sets of 20 laps done before noon, I am halfway to achieving my goal of 4000 steps in the day. Sounds easy. Actually, it is. The most difficult part is getting the first 10 steps, in other words... getting started. I have also found that while I am walking, I think about things I need to accomplish that day, week or month. After I am done walking, I write down my thoughts and goals. This helps me get organized because as I get older, I forget things if I don't write them down or complete the task right away. Those of you who are tech savvy probably document it on your phone, I am old school and write it down on paper. I find great joy in marking those tasks off when they are completed. (I may even do a happy dance.)

In conclusion, what works for me to counteract the stress and tension is to move. MOVING IS KEY. It is too easy to sit in a chair all day and not move the joints that may be aching. Find out what works for you. Take it one step at a time. Just make sure you take that step.