

# Make This Year The Best Ever

## Ten Tips That Will Alter Your Life

by Dr. Kathleen Hall

(NAPSA)—Are you overworked, overbooked and overwhelmed? Don't panic, with a few simple changes you can make a huge difference in your life.

Here are ten tips that will not only reduce stress but will allow you to find the extraordinary meaning in everyday activities.

**1. Stress reduction in a minute.** Studies show that during the day, as little as five minutes of meditation, deep breathing and yoga can lower blood pressure, release healing hormones, increase creativity and production and help your ability to handle stressful situations.

**2. Exercise at least 30 minutes every other day.** Walk at lunch, set a treadmill up in your television room. Take up Pilates. Exercise lowers your risk of stroke, diabetes, arthritis, cancer, heart disease and osteoporosis.

**3. Laugh as often as possible.** Laughter releases endorphins, the body's natural pain killers. Laughter lowers blood pressure, reduces stress hormones and boosts your immune function.

**4. Play.** Playfulness increases creativity and increases disease-fighting immune cells.

**5. Pay attention.** Become aware of emotions (stressors and calming forces) and how these affect your choices, relationships, home life and work.

**6. Eat breakfast.** People who eat breakfast consume less fat and have a higher intake of essential vitamins and minerals, resulting in lower serum cholesterol and a lower heart attack risk.

**7. Get a pet.** Studies show that owning a pet can help reduce



**Making simple changes takes only minutes a day and can help reduce harmful stress levels.**

blood pressure. Emotional life savers, pets help people experience intimacy and deal with changes in their lives.

**8. You need a friend.** Friendship is not a luxury, but is essential to work-life balance and your health. Studies show isolation decreases immune functioning.

**9. Maintain an attitude of gratitude.** It's impossible to be grateful and experience stress at the same time. Studies tell us daily gratitude exercises result in higher levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, optimism and energy.

**10. Altruism and philanthropy.** Altruism neutralizes negative emotions and makes people feel stronger and more energetic. It counters the harmful effects of stress.

*Dr. Kathleen Hall is an author, motivational speaker and stress management expert. Her book, "Alter Your Life," offers solutions for reducing stress and creating balance in busy lives. More information can be found at [www.drkathleenhall.com](http://www.drkathleenhall.com) or [www.alteryourlife.com](http://www.alteryourlife.com).*