

Slow Down!



Most people expect too much of themselves. Attempts to accomplish too much in a short period of time causes lots of unnecessary stress. The result is something doctors call hurry sickness, a constant state of rushing around trying to meet an endless line-up of self-imposed deadlines. Stress is the inevitable by-product of this frenetic level of activity.

Here's how to turn your activity meter to "slow" instead of "go."

- Leave your wristwatch at home on days you don't absolutely have to be somewhere on time.
- Practice doing one thing at a time instead of two or three things at once (like talking on the phone and reading your mail).
- Make a deliberate effort to speak more slowly. Don't cut other people off in midsentence.
- Walk at a slow, steady pace, not a racewalker's clip.
- Smile and greet people instead of occupying your thoughts with where you're headed or what you're going to do next.
- Drive no faster than the posted speed limit.
- Get used to waiting in line without getting agitated.
- Allow a buffer zone of 15 minutes between appointments, to give your brain and body some stress-free "breathing space."
- Schedule some free time into every day. It's not a waste of time to rest and do nothing.
- Take time to "smell the roses"—that is, to notice beauty and appreciate the little things in life.