Bubbles, Bath and Beyond

May 2, 2011 By Cristina Gonzalez

First, set the mood by lighting some candles. Grab still-warm towels from the dryer. Place an inflatable bath pillow, a crossword puzzle and a good book within arm's reach. Turn on the slow jams or that jazz CD you've been meaning to check out. Now you're ready to slip everything off, slide into a bubble bath and let your worries melt away. A bubble bath is a simple and luxurious way to calm your mind and nourish your spirit. Instead of hopping into the shower and mulling over the evening's to-do list while your hands rush to lather, rinse and dry yourself—stop. Slow down. And transform a bath into a deliberate, calming, replenishing and renewing experience. Calgon, take our cares of HIV away.

Five Relaxation Tips

1. **Just breathe.** In the few minutes it takes you to mail a bill or load the dishwasher, you can take a couple of deep breaths instead. Breathing exercises can instantly calm the mind and body by changing blood pH and blood pressure. They can also help train the body to react to stressful situations in a safe way. So take several long, meaningful breaths and relax.
2. **Get moving.** Go for a run, take a lap in the pool or start a dance party in your living room. Studies have shown that even 15 minutes of physical activity, just three times a week, is enough for you to feel the good vibes.
3. **Get creative.** Express what's on your mind or in your heart with a poem, song, painting, sculpture, crafts. The steady process of creation can quiet loud, nagging worries and help you tap into different sides of yourself. No judgments, no deadlines. Just relax.
4. **Go ahead and giggle.** Laughter may not cure everything that ails you, but among its numerous health benefits are the abilities to soothe tension, stimulate circulation and help muscles relax—all of which calm you down. You'll feel better. No joke.
5. **Treat Yourself.** Crack open a bottle of wine, bite into that bar of chocolate, or splurge for a 10-minute massage. Give yourself permission to indulge, just a little bit, and feel the stress slip away and the relaxation settle in.

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