

Tips for a stress-free summer

July 9, 2002, Toronto — Stressless summer is not an oxymoron. Summertime often brings a change of routine and that in itself can be stressful. Stress also occurs when the mind says one thing and actions contradict that little voice in your head. The equilibrium between the mind and body becomes more unbalanced when circumstances are not ideal. For instance, when the clock says it's time to leave for the cottage and the traffic on the highway looks like parking lot.

Planning ahead helps to alleviate stress. “If you make a conscious decision beforehand to make the journey part of the holiday, then you can overlook someone who cuts you off on the highway or choose not be bothered by the long lineups at airport security,” says Georgina Cannon, Director of the Ontario Hypnosis Centre. “In other words, shift into low gear before you go, so that when you find you have time on your hands, you are prepared.”

In the car, listen to a book on tape or your favourite CD and sing along or teach yourself to whistle to the radio. On a plane, read an enthralling novel, a magazine you never have time for, play solitaire, write a letter or practice relaxation techniques right in your seat.

“Being stress free is not the absence of conflict, but the absence of inner conflict,” says Cannon. “Step-by-step goal setting even when planning your drive to the cottage, can help to reduce the gap between expectation and reality. Taking tasks and setting small goals within each task gives you a feeling of accomplishment, and that reduces stress.”

For severely stressful situations, Cannon recommends self-hypnosis. “If you set your goals, however small,” she says, “achieve them and combine that with an effective self-hypnosis program, you'll feel peaceful and satisfied.”

Located in Toronto's Yorkville neighborhood, the Ontario Hypnosis Centre offers both one on one consultations and group workshops on goal setting, self-hypnosis and stress management.