LOW STRESS LIVING
ELEVEN WAYS TO DESTRESS YOUR LIFE

N.A. NOEL ARTIST OF THE YEAR

WELCOME TO MY COUNTRY KITCHEN

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Have you ever seen a woman that always seems to have a smile on her face, even under pressure? Do you know a coworker that always seems to have time to volunteer to help at the youth center, while juggling three children, a husband and a career? I do, and I began to wonder how they keep it all together. I did a survey of 100 successful women and came up with the top eleven ideas for managing your life, and stress level.
**Believe**

Whether you believe in God or in something you call a higher power, several studies have found a strong correlation between lifelong well-being and the sense of meaning and purpose that comes from having faith, says psychiatrist Harold Jenkins, M.D., author of Making Peace with Your Past. “A spiritual perspective enables you to stand back and see your troubles in a larger context,” says Jenkins, adding that religious people are generally less stressed and healthier.

“I always remind myself that God will never give me more than I can handle and that I cannot do everything by myself,” says stay-at-home mother of five Diannah Enger, 35, of Cody, WY, who finds she has more patience when she attends church regularly. Enger says that sometimes while she’s praying, the solution she is looking for shows up. And although Elena Keegan, 33, a yoga instructor and mother of two in Baton Rouge, LA, is not a member of any organized religion, she maintains her own connection to God. “I generally agree with the common principles on which all major religions are based,” she says. “To sum it up, Do good; be good. When I am doing these two things, I have very little stress in my life.”

**Take Control**

Low stress women keep their thoughts positive, they also know when to put the brakes on a situation that’s spiraling downward. Many years ago Julie Fritz, 42, of Indianapolis hit a financial wall. A mother of three who does administrative work for non-profits, Fritz says she’s so laid-back that at one point she and her husband let things slide too far, things like their bank balance. “We were behind on most of our credit card payments, and the creditors were calling regularly,” she relates. “We were living paycheck to paycheck.” The situation came to a head when her husband wrote a check to a store, and it was refused. Determined to avoid going into bankruptcy, the couple took action. She and her husband entered a consumer credit counseling program, attended support group meetings, cut back on all extras, and worked for more than two years to erase their debt. “We changed our spending habits and decided what was important in our lives,” she says. “Now my commitment to tackling financial problems as they arise lets me begin and end my workdays stress free.”

**Schedule Fun**

Low stress women don’t deny themselves pleasure in order to get their work done. Rather, most recognize that they need fun and relaxation and then plan it. Amanda Stayton, 34, a stay-at-home mother of three in Anderson, AL, recently rediscovered the

“Don’t deny yourself pleasure in order to get your work done. Rather, recognize that you need fun and relaxation, and then plan it.”

Opposite page:  Taking time to enjoy an afternoon boat ride keeps the Day’s stress-free. Below: Playing with her dog, Lady, helps keep life in perspective for Amanda Stayton.