



FREE GUIDE

The Calm Woman's Guide to **Stress Relief**

Simple holistic habits you can start today: calming teas, walking, breathing, sleep and stress-friendly eating

Calming teas

Walking

Breathwork

Sleep

7-day plan



Welcome, I'm so glad you're here

If you're juggling work, family and your health goals, stress can become background noise. You may not notice it until you're awake at 2 a.m., reaching for something sweet at 4 p.m., or wondering why your cycle feels "off."

This guide isn't another to-do list. It's a collection of small, gentle habits: a warm cup of tea, a short walk, a few slow breaths, a calmer evening. Pick one or two that feel doable, and let them grow from there.

How to use this guide

- Read it once, then choose **one** habit to start this week.
- Use the 7-day starter plan and the printable checklist at the end.
- Be kind to yourself. Missing a day is normal. Just begin again.

Why stress matters for women's health

Stress isn't "all in your head." Under pressure, your body releases stress hormones, mainly **cortisol** and adrenaline. In short bursts this is helpful: it sharpens focus and gives you energy. The trouble starts when stress is all-day, every day, and your body rarely gets the signal that it's safe to rest.

Here's how ongoing stress can show up, in simple terms:

- **Sleep:** Cortisol is meant to be higher in the morning and lower at night. When stress keeps it up in the evening, falling asleep or staying asleep can get harder.
- **Blood sugar:** Stress hormones raise blood sugar so you have quick fuel. Over time, this can make energy feel more like a rollercoaster.
- **Appetite and cravings:** Many women crave sugary or salty "comfort" foods when stressed or tired. That's not a lack of willpower; it's your body looking for quick energy.
- **Cycles and hormones:** Stress, poor sleep and irregular eating can all affect how you feel across your cycle, and for some women they show up as cycle changes. If you're working on fertility, weight or metabolic health, calming your stress response is a supportive foundation.

The good news? Small, regular habits can help your body shift out of "go mode" and into "rest and digest."

Calming teas: your evening ritual in a cup

Holding a warm mug is a simple way to build a pause into your day. Some favourites:

- **Chamomile:** A classic before-bed tea with a soft, apple-like flavour. In a clinical trial, a chamomile extract (in capsules, not tea) helped people with generalized anxiety keep their symptoms lower over several months. Tea is much milder than an extract, but it makes a lovely calming ritual.
- **Lemon balm:** A lemony herb from the mint family, traditionally used for relaxation and to settle a nervous stomach.
- **Peppermint:** Refreshing and caffeine-free. Many people enjoy it after meals. (It can make heartburn worse for some, so skip it if you have reflux.)
- **Rooibos:** A naturally caffeine-free red tea from South Africa with a warm, slightly sweet taste. A good swap if you love the ritual of black tea.
- **Tulsi (holy basil):** Used for centuries in Ayurvedic tradition as a calming, “balancing” herb. It has a peppery, clove-like flavour.
- **A note on green tea:** Green tea contains **L-theanine**, a compound studied for relaxation. In one small trial, healthy adults taking an L-theanine supplement for four weeks reported less stress and better sleep. But green tea also has caffeine, so enjoy it in the morning or early afternoon, not at night.

How to brew

Use 1 tea bag or about 1 teaspoon of dried herb per cup (250 mL) of freshly boiled water. Cover your mug while it steeps (this keeps the aromatic oils in) and steep for 5 to 10 minutes. For green tea, use water that’s just off the boil and steep for only 2 to 3 minutes so it doesn’t turn bitter.

Your evening tea ritual

About an hour before bed, put your phone in another room, brew a caffeine-free tea, and sit somewhere comfortable. Sip slowly. Notice the warmth of the mug, the smell, the taste. Let it be your signal to your body: *the day is done*.



Tea safety notes

- Check with your doctor, pharmacist or another qualified practitioner before using herbal teas regularly if you are **pregnant, trying to conceive, or breastfeeding**, or if you take **medication** such as blood thinners, thyroid medication, blood-pressure medication, sedatives or hormonal birth control. Some herbs can interact with medicines. For example, chamomile has reported interactions with warfarin and may affect how well birth control pills work.
- Avoid chamomile if you're allergic to ragweed, daisies, marigolds or chrysanthemums.
- Skip **licorice root** tea (often found in "calming" or "adrenal" blends) if you have high blood pressure, heart or kidney concerns. Always read the ingredient list on blends.
- Stick to everyday amounts, and stop if you notice any side effects.

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Walking: the simplest stress reliever there is

Walking is free, gentle and easy to fit into your day. It clears your head and supports your metabolism.

- **A 10-minute walk after meals:** In a study of adults with type 2 diabetes, walking for 10 minutes after each main meal lowered after-meal blood sugar more than one 30-minute walk at another time of day. The effect was biggest after dinner.
- **Morning light:** Try to get outside within an hour or two of waking, even for 5 to 10 minutes. Natural daylight helps set your body clock, which supports better sleep at night.
- **Nature walks:** Green spaces seem to have a special calming effect. In a University of Michigan study, people who spent time in a nature spot they enjoyed had lower levels of cortisol in their saliva afterward. The best "return" came from about 20 to 30 minutes. A local park, trail or tree-lined street counts.
- **Mindful walking:** Leave the earbuds at home now and then. Notice your feet on the ground, the air on your skin and five things you can see.

Realistic step goals

You don't need to hit 10,000 steps to benefit. A large analysis of 15 studies found that people who walked more each day had a lower risk of early death, with benefits levelling off at around 6,000 to 8,000 steps for adults over 60 and 8,000 to 10,000 steps for younger adults. Some of the biggest gains came from simply moving up from the least active group. So start where you are: if you walk about 3,000 steps a day now, aim for 4,000. Add a little at a time.

Breathing: your built-in calm button

Your breath is the part of your stress response you can directly control, and it goes everywhere with you. Slow breathing, especially with a longer exhale, helps signal to your nervous system that you're safe. In a Stanford study, people who did five minutes of breathwork a day for a month had better mood than those who did mindfulness meditation for the same time. The biggest benefit came from exhale-focused breathing. In another small study, eight weeks of diaphragmatic breathing training lowered cortisol levels in healthy adults.

Find a comfortable seat, or lie down, and try these four techniques.

Belly (diaphragmatic) breathing

How long: 3 to 5 minutes. *When:* anytime, especially before meals or in bed.

1. Place one hand on your chest and one on your belly.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose, letting your belly rise into your hand. Your chest should stay fairly still.
3. Breathe out gently through your nose or pursed lips, feeling your belly fall.
4. Keep it slow and easy, about 4 to 6 breaths a minute if that's comfortable.

Extended-exhale breathing

How long: 2 to 5 minutes. *When:* in the moment, when you feel tense, rushed or overwhelmed.

1. Breathe in through your nose for a count of 4.
2. Breathe out slowly through your mouth for a count of 6 to 8, as if you were blowing out a candle slowly.
3. Repeat. If you like, try a "double inhale": two short sniffs in through your nose, then one long sigh out.

Box breathing

How long: 4 to 6 rounds (about 2 to 4 minutes). *When:* to focus and steady yourself before a meeting, an appointment or a hard conversation.

1. Breathe in through your nose for 4 counts.
2. Hold gently for 4 counts.
3. Breathe out through your mouth for 4 counts.
4. Hold for 4 counts. Then begin again.

4-7-8 breathing

How long: start with 4 rounds (about 1 to 2 minutes). *When:* at bedtime or when your mind is racing.

1. Breathe out fully through your mouth.
2. Breathe in quietly through your nose for 4 counts.
3. Hold your breath for 7 counts.

4. Breathe out slowly through your mouth for 8 counts, with a soft “whoosh.”
5. Repeat up to 4 times. If the counts feel too long, speed up your counting but keep the same rhythm.

A gentle note on breathing

Skip the breath holds (just breathe in and out slowly) if you're **pregnant**, if you feel **dizzy or light-headed**, or if holding your breath feels uncomfortable. Breathing should feel easy, never forced. If you have a heart or lung condition, check with your healthcare provider first. If focusing on your breath makes you more anxious, open your eyes and focus on your feet on the floor instead.

Your 5-minute reset

Use this when you need a break between tasks, after a stressful call, or before dinner.

- **Minute 1: Arrive.** Sit with your feet flat on the floor. Drop your shoulders. Notice 3 things you can see and 2 you can hear.
- **Minutes 2–3: Breathe.** Do belly breathing, then switch to extended exhales (in for 4, out for 6 to 8).
- **Minute 4: Soften.** Roll your shoulders and neck slowly, unclench your jaw and stretch your arms overhead.
- **Minute 5: Choose.** Take a sip of water and pick one small, kind next step for yourself.

4 A sleep wind-down routine

Stress makes sleep harder, and poor sleep makes stress feel bigger. A predictable wind-down tells your body it's time to rest.

- **Keep a steady rhythm.** Aim to go to bed and wake up at about the same time each day, even on weekends.
- **Dim the lights** about an hour before bed, and put screens away (or at least turn on night mode).
- **Enjoy your tea ritual** with a caffeine-free herbal tea.
- **Do a “brain dump.”** Write down tomorrow's to-dos so your mind doesn't have to hold on to them.
- **Breathe or stretch.** A few rounds of 4–7–8 breathing or gentle stretching in bed can help you settle.
- **Make your room sleep-friendly:** cool, dark and quiet.

5 Stress-friendly eating

What and when you eat can soothe or add to the stress your body feels. You don't need a perfect diet; small, steady changes help.

- **Eat regular meals.** Long gaps without food can leave you shaky, irritable and craving sugar. Try not to skip breakfast, and aim for meals every 4 to 5 hours.
- **Add protein to every meal:** eggs, Greek yogurt, fish, chicken, tofu, lentils or beans. Protein, fibre and healthy fats together help keep blood sugar steady.
- **Include magnesium-rich foods:** leafy greens, pumpkin seeds, almonds, black beans, oats and a square of dark chocolate. Some research suggests magnesium may help with mild anxiety, though the evidence is still limited.
- **Get your omega-3s:** salmon, sardines or trout a couple of times a week, plus chia, ground flax and walnuts.
- **Watch caffeine and alcohol timing.** Try to finish caffeine by early afternoon. Alcohol may make you sleepy at first, but it often disrupts sleep later in the night.
- **Stay hydrated.** Mild dehydration can feel like fatigue or low mood. Keep a water bottle nearby and sip through the day.

Easy calm-plate idea

Half a plate of colourful veggies, a palm-sized portion of protein, a fist of whole grains or starchy veggies, and a thumb of healthy fat, like olive oil, avocado or seeds.

6 Gentle movement, journaling and connection

- **Gentle movement and stretching:** You don't need an intense workout to feel calmer. Five to ten minutes of stretching, gentle yoga or dancing in the kitchen can release tension. Try a forward fold, cat-cow, child's pose or legs up the wall before bed.
- **Journaling:** Writing helps get worries out of your head and onto paper. Try three prompts: *What's on my mind?* *What's one thing I can control today?* *What am I grateful for?* Five minutes is enough.
- **Connection:** Talking to someone you trust is a natural stress reliever. Call a friend, share a meal or join a walking group.
- **Time outdoors:** Even a few minutes on a balcony or under a tree counts.



7 Your 7-day starter plan

Add one small habit each day, and keep the ones you enjoy.

Day	Focus	Try this
1	Breathe	Do the 5-minute reset once today.
2	Tea	Start your evening tea ritual, an hour before bed, phone away.
3	Walk	Take a 10-minute walk after one meal.
4	Eat	Add protein to breakfast and finish caffeine by early afternoon.
5	Light and nature	Spend 10 to 20 minutes outside, ideally in the morning or somewhere green.
6	Sleep	Try the full wind-down routine with a brain dump and 4-7-8 breathing.
7	Reflect and connect	Journal for 5 minutes, call someone you love, and choose 2 habits to keep.



Your daily calm checklist

Print this page and tick off what you did each day. There's no need to do everything. Every tick counts.

Habit	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning light (5–10 min outside)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Protein at breakfast	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Water bottle refilled through the day	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10-minute walk after a meal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Caffeine finished by early afternoon	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5-minute breathing reset	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Magnesium-rich food (greens, seeds, beans)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gentle stretch or movement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Connected with someone	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evening tea ritual, screens away	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In bed at my usual time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How I felt this week: _____

One habit I want to keep: _____

When to seek help

Everyday stress is a normal part of life, but sometimes it's more than habits can handle. Please reach out to your doctor or another healthcare provider if you have anxiety or worry that won't let up, low mood or loss of interest that lasts more than a couple of weeks, panic attacks, or trouble sleeping, eating or getting through your day.

If you are in crisis

If you're having thoughts of harming yourself or ending your life, please reach out right away. In Canada, you can **call or text 9-8-8** (Suicide Crisis Helpline), 24 hours a day, every day of the year. If your safety is at immediate risk, call **9-1-1** or go to your nearest emergency department. Outside Canada, contact your local emergency number or crisis line.

Let's take the next step together

Stress relief isn't one big change. It's lots of small, kind choices that add up. If you'd like a plan that fits your body, hormones and life, whether your focus is weight, blood sugar, hormonal health or fertility, I'd love to help.

Book your free discovery call

Book a free, no-obligation discovery call through the Leafy Greens Nutrition website, or email me at leafygreensnutrition@gmail.com. We'll talk about your goals and see if we're a good fit.

Disclaimer

This guide is for general educational purposes only and is not medical advice. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease, and it does not replace care from your doctor or another qualified healthcare provider. Please talk to your healthcare provider before making changes to your diet, movement, herbal tea or supplement use, especially if you are pregnant, trying to conceive, breastfeeding, have a medical condition or take medication.

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