



\$5,000 WINNER

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 Stress Management



Microstep

I take a break and do breathing exercises whenever I feel anxious.



Outcome

“I’m less stressed.”

I was feeling tired and irritable, and I didn’t want to be around anyone, not even my grown kids, who live with me, and my husband, Elvis. I was too tired to exercise, my muscles ached, I gained weight, and I found out a few months ago that I had hypothyroidism. I’m studying to become an IT analyst, and it was all too much. I was completely stressed out. I’m now on medication, but I knew I needed to change my lifestyle as well. I thought the Thrive Challenge could give me good techniques to lower my stress and connect with people in a more meaningful way.

To start, I focused on relaxation Microsteps.

I take a break and do breathing exercises whenever I feel anxious. Just slowly inhaling and exhaling for a few minutes helps me to calm down. Another strategy is watching Thrive Resets — I really like the nature ones where you escape to a river or mountains.

I’m making a choice to recharge and sleep better.

I put my phone on the charger when I get home from work, and I don’t look at it. Instead of scrolling through social media, I go into my bedroom, turn on my lamp and sit in peace reading. I’m re-reading the Twilight books right now. Before I turn off the light, I write in my journal about anything that’s bothering me, like bills that need to be paid. Without any distractions or worries, I can fall asleep easily, and now I have energy for chores and food prep in the mornings.

I’m much more patient with my family.

I used to get irritated with my kids if they didn’t do the chores, but now I’ve learned to just walk away and breathe or do a Reset if I’m upset. I’ve also explained to them about my condition and they’re more understanding and helpful now. If I don’t have time to cook, my husband and kids will make dinner.

One big difference in my life is that I’m taking time for myself.

I’ve always put everyone else first and now I’m scheduling time for my hobbies. I go for rides on motorcycles on my days off. I just go wherever the highway takes me — it’s very freeing being out on the open road. At home, I love drawing and coloring. My secret hobby: when no one is around I dance to hip hop. I may look silly but it’s fun and good exercise, so I don’t care!

With more energy, I’m going for walks in nature.

I walk along the river trails; the sound of water is very calming, and I turn my phone off so I can stay present. I’ve also been going out with my dogs. I’ll throw a ball and we’ll walk around our beautiful property. We have three acres with woods behind the house. I walk barefoot, and I really feel like I am connecting with Mother Earth. Sometimes I take myself to Folly Beach in South Carolina; it’s peaceful by the ocean and I love hearing the waves crashing on the shore. I hunt for sea shells and shark teeth!

My kids and I are having fun.

Zachary, who’s 20, works at Walmart with me and my husband. Makayla, who’s 17, is going into the army soon, so I’m appreciating our time together. We got season passes to an amusement park in Charlotte and we love to spend the day there on the weekend. I have more energy for the rides now, and to relax, I love the wave pool.

I’m not letting my health condition get the better of me.

I’ve lost a couple of pounds. It’s not a lot, but I’m proud that I’m moving in the right direction and my joints don’t hurt as much. Life is still hectic with my studies, but I’m focusing better and I’m so grateful for my life. I’m 39, and I’m looking forward to my 40s. I’m getting where I want to be one day at a time.