

# Taking A Time Out

## Playful Ways To Budget Financial Stress

(NAPSA)—Anytime of year—especially tax season—can be a great opportunity to learn how to manage your stress, specifically financial stress.

Stress can have real consequences for the mind and body. Some of the health risks include stroke and heart attack; addictive behaviors—alcohol, anger/rage; depression and anxiety; suicide and weight gain or weight loss.

“Research tells us the No. 1 stressor for all of us is financial stress,” says Dr. Kathleen Hall, ex-financial advisor for a Wall Street firm, current CEO and founder of The Stress Institute. In a survey done by Frank N. Magid Associates and casual games site Pogo.com, over 62 percent of respondents stated that finances were what made them most stressed.

Dr. Hall says “R.E.L.A.X.” to budget your stress and spend less on worry:

**R=REST:** Rest your mind and body. Create time to take a bath. A bath restores your physical and mental health. It is an opportunity to heal, nurture and relax from your busy day. Create a “mental escape” when you are stressed by focusing your attention on your favorite vacation or relaxation spot.

**E=EXERCISE:** Science tells us exercise lowers blood pressure and cholesterol, gets more oxygen to the brain, causes endorphins to be released and other health benefits. Try swimming or go for a walk.

**L=LOVE:** Connections with ourselves and others reduces stress. Connect with yourself through your feet. Take off your



**Play can provide a serious alternative to stress during tax season and other times of the year.**

shoes and rub your feet on the floor. Connect with others by playing an online game. In the survey, it was found that 1 in 3 people on the Internet play online games to relieve stress.

**A=ANIMALS:** Being around animals relaxes us. Studies show us that owning a pet can ward off depression, lower blood pressure and boost immunity. Try bird watching. You can sit at home or join a group. The variety of colors, shapes, sizes and songs create a constant source of serenity and happiness.

**X=EXPRESS YOURSELF:** Self-expression does wonders for self-esteem and stress levels. Surround yourself with smells, colors, sounds and objects to touch that make you feel calm and relaxed. Gardening can improve your mood and bring beauty to your busy life.

For more stress tips and advice on how to create a balanced life through playing games and connecting with friends and family, visit [www.pogo.com/take5toplay](http://www.pogo.com/take5toplay).