



# 22 summer stress busters

Relax your mind, body and soul with our simple little tension fighters **by Rachel Moser**

Ahhh, summer. Supposed to be relaxing, right? But between softball games, cookouts and vacations, it's easy to feel, well, pressure to make the most of every moment. Call it the are-we-having-fun-yet syndrome. "People tend to have high expectations for the summer," says Robert Leahy, Ph.D., director of the American Institute for Cognitive Therapy and author of *The Worry Cure*, "which can lead to increased anxiety and worry."

Have no fear—we've rounded up the best stress busters for the moments when tension begins to creep in.

## make time for fun

"Dedicate time to doing interesting activities just for you," suggests Dr. Leahy.

**Get your game on** "My son and I have a 500 rummy tournament each summer," says Rose Hoornbeek of Accord, New York. At the end of the summer, the loser has to buy the winner lunch (or fix his or her favorite meal).

**Let loose** As soon as the weather is warm enough, Blynda Killian of

Sacramento, California, rolls down the windows, turns up the music and sings at the top of her lungs whenever she's in the car—even if she doesn't know the words to the song. "I put together a playlist of upbeat tunes that put me in a great mood," she says.

**Be playful** To banish tension, Beth Batig of Redmond, Washington, shaves a big bowl of ice cubes into "snow" (using her countertop Ice

Shaver from Target), then has a snowball fight in the backyard with her husband and daughter.

**Get the giggles** Lorri Hafer of Spring Hill, Florida, pops in an *I Love Lucy* DVD to wind down. "Laughter is a great stress reducer!" she says.

**Catch up on reading** Been wanting to finally read *The Great Gatsby*? *The Catcher in the Rye*? *The Da Vinci Code*? Make a list of the books you haven't had the time for, recommends Dr. Leahy. Then actually get through each one.

**Daydream** "It always feels good to talk about your aspirations," says Lee Bach of Barnegat, New Jersey. She'll invite a good friend over to sit and chat about the things they'd most like to do in life.

**Rekindle the romance** On breezy summer nights, Deborah Maloney of Medford, Massachusetts, and her husband get ice cream cones and sit on the beach talking, just the two of them.

**Go fishing** "Summer is the best time to appreciate nature," says Dr. Leahy, "which (Please turn to 82)

