

Los Angeles

MAGAZINE

Deep Breaths: Why The Fact That Los Angeles Is The Most Stressful City Is Not Another Thing To Stress About



L.A.'s got plenty of things that can lower your cortisol levels

Posted on May 23, 2013 by Marielle Wakim

While California as a whole managed to avoid a call-out in Gallup-Healthway's report on the most stressed out states, Los Angeles wasn't so lucky when it came to research on individual cities: The most recent study, conducted by [Forbes](#), concluded that Los Angeles holds the top spot when it comes to anxiety-stricken towns.

The report, which analyzed quality-of-life data including housing affordability, air quality, average weekly working hours, and traffic congestion from the 40 largest U.S. cities, paints L.A. as quite the traumatic place to settle down. And while it may seem that way, our city is home to plenty of things that can lower your cortisol levels.

Here are ten [Best Of L.A.](#)-certified ways you can release the tension, starting with some activities perfect for the upcoming holiday weekend. And if these don't work, try to remember: L.A. has an average of 266 sunny days per year--always something to celebrate.

If R&R releases your tension: [Spa at Terranea Resort](#), *Best Massage With A View*

“The massage experience inside the VIP treatment room at the Spa at Terranea Resort is certainly the most blissful in the L.A. area. Visual gratification is nonstop, including posttreatment, when spa goers can retire to the adjoining ocean-view terrace.”

If retail therapy makes you happy: [Runaway Runway](#), *Best Fashion Truck*

“With its twin fitting rooms, flat-screen TV, air-conditioning, and stylish striped awning, Runaway Runway is the closest thing on the road to a brick-and-mortar store. Peruse Beulah leather jackets, Flying Monkey foil jeans, Linda Richards furs, Dolce Vita Joust booties, and 14-karat-gold Gab+Cos bracelets—all as much as 50 percent below retail.”

If Ohm-ing brings you bliss: [Basics of Mindfulness Meditation](#), *Best Stress-Reduction Class*

“Don’t beat yourself up if your mind starts to wander,’ Allen Weiss tells students in his Basics of Mindfulness Meditation course at InsightLA. There’s never an intimidating moment during the six weeks of secular-based instruction, as Weiss advises on everything from how to sit to ‘compassionate awareness.’”

If endorphins get you high: [Studio 1-On-1](#), *Best Early-Morning Personal Training*

“The workouts at the strength-training facility are customized to meet individual fitness goals. The big guy in the room is trainer David Muller, who in 20 years of bodybuilding has learned how to motivate his charges to do five more shirt-bursting reps.”

If comfort food keeps you sane: [Pann’s Restaurant](#), *Best Biscuits*

“Run by the gracious Poulos family since 1958, the Googie masterpiece offers its patronage not just beautifully restored terrazzo floors and a crazy cantilevered roof, but also sautéed liver and onions, and a fried chicken dinner with the city’s best biscuits that, bar none, is as comforting as anything from the deepest South.”

If spinning your wheels lightens your load: [Palos Verdes Drive](#), *Best Scenic Bike Path*

“With no zoned-out pedestrians (as on the beach) or speeding drivers (PCH), and far better views than both, **Palos Verdes Drive** is cyclist heaven. The wide route flows alongside a eucalyptus-studded median and then joins the coast at Malaga Cove.”

If brewskis take the edge off: [Drago Centro](#), *Best Happy Hour*

“As long as the place is open, you can order select cocktails for a mere \$5, along with tasty bites at tasty prices (\$3 to \$10). A Manhattan and salmon *crostini* can cost less than a vodka and soda and peanuts elsewhere. Free three-hour parking starting at 5 p.m. should also gratify penny-pinchers.”

If music brings you peace: [The Baked Potato](#), *Best Jazz Club*

“The Baked Potato is home base when everyone’s in town, and you never know who might sit in.”

If nature puts you in a tranquil state: [Escondido Falls](#), *Best Easy To Reach Waterfall*

“Hikers are swallowed up in a canopy of oak, sycamore, and walnut trees. Soon looms the two-story-high waterfall, which resembles a Hawaiian fern grotto, the fall’s rock face looking like a pitted tiki figure.”

If sugar makes for a sweeter demeanor: [The Farm Of Beverly Hills](#), *Best Brownies*

“Moist, dark, and fudgy in the middle, they have a light, crisp top crust and melt on your tongue.”

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Furthermore—oh joy, oh rapture—they are better a day, even two, after they're baked. They can also be put to wickedly good use in a brownie sundae.”

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