

7062 – Stress Reduction



Deep Breathing: Slowly breathe in, filling your lungs and let your stomach relax and expand. Hold your breath for a few seconds, and then slowly exhale until your lungs feel empty. Feel the body relax and tensions ease. Repeat five to 10 times. You can do this three to four times a day or as needed. Deep breathing can be done at your desk, on an assembly line, in your car, at home, or almost anywhere else.

Progressive muscular relaxation: effectively eases tense muscles. First, tense a major muscle group in your body (face, shoulders, arms, chest, back, stomach, buttocks, legs or feet) hold for a few seconds then release the tension. Feel the warmth as blood flow increases in that area. Choose a second muscle group and repeat the same process. Go through all muscle groups in your body from head to floor. The entire process takes only a few minutes and you can immediately feel and appreciate the relaxed feeling in your body.

Gentle stretching can relax tense muscles:

- While sitting, tip your head slowly from side to side, then forward and back. Repeat several times.
- While sitting, stretch forward letting your head and arms come forward. Hold for 30 seconds, straighten up slowly, and repeat.
- While standing, slowly stretch to the side by letting one arm hang down and bending the other one over your head in the direction you are stretching. Repeat on the other side.
- While lying down, stretch your legs out straight and at the same time reach your arms over your head. Hold 30 seconds. Repeat several times.
- You may wish to stretch other muscles in your body. Remember to stretch slowly and don't strain.



Visualization: allows your mind to focus on something positive. It's like organized daydreaming. With your eyes closed, imagine yourself someplace you really enjoy such as a beach, ski slope, trout stream, or forest. Imagine the warmth of the sun, gentle breezes, good companions, time to relax, and pleasant smells. Hear the sounds of the surf, birds, rustling leaves, or babbling brooks. In just a few minutes you can clear your mind, if only briefly, of the stressful clutter of everyday living.

Go for a Walk: Walk briskly for at least 15 minutes. Walking is a great way to clear your head and be physically active at the same time. You will be surprised at the clarity and focus you will feel after doing this regularly in your schedule.

Set goals: Take time to write down your goals for today, next week, and next year. Reward yourself for meeting daily and weekly goals. You can revise your goals as you go. Check your list at least once a week.

Take responsibility for yourself and your life. Looking at life from the standpoint of being in control is much less stressful than feeling helpless. Don't blame others. It won't make you feel better and certainly won't change the behaviour of others.

Be aware of what is happening in your life: Step back and take an objective look. Is this what you want? What can you do to make changes?

Everyone can make constructive changes: Pick on or two of these suggestions and take action! These approaches are good for mental health even if you're not under a lot of stress.

Always expect the best possible outcome to any situation. Practice positive thinking.

