

DISTRESS OR DE-STRESS

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES TO REDUCE STRESS ON-THE-SPOT

Relaxation techniques help to reduce the symptoms of stress. They are a great way to enjoy a better quality of life and help you cope not only in stressful times, but everyday life. Everyone has the power to make constructive changes in their lives. **Pick one or two of these suggestions and take action!** Always expect the best possible outcome to any situation. Practice positive thinking.

- **Picture yourself relaxed:** Is your mind too talkative to meditate? Try creating a peaceful “dreamscape.” Replace stress with an image that evokes a sense of calm (e.g., fantasy island).
- **Breathe deeply:** Imagine your center as a deep, powerful place. Feel your breath coming and going as your mind stays focused there. Repeat 10 times, relax more fully each time.
- **Look around you:** Mindfulness means focusing on one activity at a time, forget multi-tasking! Stress will take a back seat as long as you focus on something in the present.
- **Show some love:** Cuddle your pet, snuggle your spouse, or talk to a friend about the good things in your lives. Physical contact may help lower blood pressure and decrease stress hormones.
- **Try self-massage:** Place both hands on your shoulders and neck. Squeeze with your fingers and palms. Rub vigorously, keeping shoulders relaxed.
- **Take a time out:** When your temper is about to erupt, find a quiet place to sit or lie down and put the stressful situation on hold.
- **Try a musical detour:** When the going gets rough, take a musical stress detour by aligning your heartbeat with the slow tempo of a relaxing song (e.g., classical music).
- **Take an attitude break:** Thirty seconds is enough time to shift your heart’s rhythm from stressed to relaxed. Envision anything that triggers a positive feeling (e.g., child, pet).
- **Go for a walk:** Walk briskly for at least 10 minutes. It is a great way to clear your head. You will be surprised at the clarity and focus you will feel after doing this regularly.
- **Set goals:** Take time to write down your goals for today, next week, and next year. Reward yourself for meeting daily and weekly goals. Check your list at least once a week.
- **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?



Sources: www.webmd.com; www.massgeneral.org