

Recognizing, Managing, and Relieving Stress

Taking the time to bring your mind and body back into balance is essential and is an important part of staying healthy.

You may run into occasions where you cannot control the amount of external stress that you experience. What you can control, however, is your internal reaction to that stress. Being able to minimize your reaction can help keep your body and mind healthy.

Most people can benefit from “downtime”—those times when you are able to recharge, renew, and bring your mind and body back into balance. Sometimes all it takes is a few moments of silence and deep breathing to revitalize you and give you a more positive outlook for the rest of your day.



Stress Relief at Your Desk

There are many techniques for preventing and relieving stress. If you ever find yourself needing to reenergize, refocus, and realign, here are a few things you can do at your desk to de-stress.

Deep Breathing

Relax and renew yourself by unplugging from the “flight or fight” stress response.

- Consciously slow your breathing.
- Close your eyes and focus on slowly taking deep, regular breaths that get progressively longer and fuller.
- Visualize each breath filling your body with positive energy.
- Do this exercise for one to five minutes.

Progressive Relaxation

For this relaxation method, focus on tightening each muscle group and then allow it to relax.

- Start at your toes and progress up your body—don’t forget your face muscles.
- Tighten, then release each muscle group as you work your way up your body.
- Tightening the muscle allows the blood to rush in when you let go and relax the muscle.
- Once you’ve finished tightening and releasing all the muscles, stay in this relaxed state for one to three minutes (longer, if you have the time).

Visualization

This technique helps you relax and focus on pleasant images to replace negative or stressful feelings.

- Relax as much as possible. (You can use deep breathing or progressive relaxation to help you relax more deeply.)
- Get a clear picture in your mind of a place that brings you peace and tranquility
- You can take a mental vacation to your favorite getaway—by the ocean, a river, a rainforest, etc.

Positive Affirmations

Positive affirmations are statements that reprogram negative thinking patterns.

- Repeat a positive statement to reframe a negative thought whenever you experience it:
- If your inner chatter is about feeling tired and weak, you may want to affirm “I am healthy and strong.”
- If you’re worried about a hectic work schedule with many projects, a good affirmation is “I accomplish things, easily and effortlessly” or “I can handle anything that comes my way.”

Taking Care

Deep relaxation is an important part of the health puzzle. Both your body and your mind need it to repair and renew.



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