

Fast Stress Reduction Techniques

Each of these stress-relieving techniques takes less than 15-minutes.



1. Breathe deeply

Take a 5-minute break and focus on your breathing. Sit up straight, eyes closed, with a hand on your belly. Slowly inhale through your nose, feeling the breath start in your abdomen and work its way to the top of your head. Reverse the process as you exhale through your mouth.

Deep breathing counters the effects of stress by slowing the heart-rate and lowering blood pressure

2. Meditate / Pray

A few minutes practice each day can help ease anxiety. Research suggests that daily meditation may help alter the brain's neural pathways, making you more resilient to stress.

Sit up straight with both feet on the floor. Close your eyes. Focus your attention on reciting – out loud, or silently – a positive mantra, such as, "I feel at peace" or, "I love myself". Place one hand on your belly to sync the mantra with your breaths. Let any distracting thoughts float by like clouds

3. Be present, Stay in the moment

Take 5-minutes and focus on only one behavior with awareness. Examples: Notice how the air feels on your face when you're walking and how your feet feel hitting the ground. Enjoy the texture and taste of each bite of food.

4. Decompress

Place a warm heat wrap around your neck and shoulders for 10-minutes. Close your eyes and relax your face, neck, upper chest, and back muscles. Remove the wrap and use a tennis ball or foam roller to massage away tension.

Place the ball between your back and wall. Lean into the ball, and hold gentle pressure for up to 15-seconds. Then move the ball to another spot, and apply pressure

5. Reach Out

Talk to others – preferably face to face, or at least on the phone. Share what's going on. You can get a fresh perspective while keeping connections with others strong.

6. Laugh out loud

Laughing out loud lowers cortisol, your body's stress hormone, and boosts brain chemicals called endorphins, which help your mood. Tune into your favorite TV show or video, reading some memes, or chatting with someone who makes you laugh and smile.

7. Play soothing music

Listening to soothing music can lower blood pressure, heart rate, and anxiety. Create a play list of songs or nature sounds, and allow your mind to focus on the different melodies, instruments, or singers in the piece. Or you can also release tension by dancing to more upbeat tunes, or singing at the top of your lungs!

8. Move

All forms of exercise, including yoga and walking, can ease depression and anxiety by helping the brain release endorphin, and by giving your body a chance to practice dealing with the stress.

You can go for a quick walk, take the stairs up and down a few flights, or do some stretching exercises

9. Tune into your body

Mentally scan your body to get a sense of how stress affects it each day.

Lie on your back, or sit with your feet on the floor. Start at your toes and work your way up to your scalp, noticing how your body feels. Simply be aware of places you feel tight or loose without trying to change anything. For 1-2 minutes, imaging each deep breath flowing to that body part.

Repeat this process as you move your focus up your body, paying close attention to sensations you feel in each body part.

10. Practice gratitude

Keep a gratitude journal to help you remember all the things that are good in your life. This helps to cancel out negative thoughts and worries.

Also, record good experiences and good health.

Celebrate accomplishments like mastering a new task at work or a new hobby