

RELAX YOUR STRESS AWAY

10 Great Ways To De-Stress

Your shoulders are tense, your back hurts. You feel grouchy and know it's all due to stress. What can you do? The relaxation techniques described below can help relieve both the physical and emotional tension that often follows stressful situations.

Relax Your Body

The next time you feel the effects of too much stress, try some of the following ways to help you relax.

- 1. Deep Breathing.** While sitting, lying down, or standing, close your eyes and breathe in slowly. Let the breath out for a count of 5-10 seconds. Take ten of these super-relaxers any time you feel tense.
- 2. Stretching.** Practice simple stretches such as the "neck stretch": stretch your neck by gently rolling your head in a half-circle, starting at one side, then dropping your chin to your chest, then to the other side.
- 3. Exercise.** All kinds of physical activity—hiking, running, bowling, walking, etc.—help to reduce stress.
- 4. Take a bath.** Ask household members to allow you at least 30 minutes of uninterrupted time.
- 5. Get a massage.** A massage is a wonderful way to get rid of physical tension. Professional masseuses generally take 30 minutes to an hour, and will work on specific areas of tension, such as lower back or neck.
- 6. Eat Well.** Reduce caffeine (in coffee, black tea, chocolate) and alcohol intake. Find out if your diet is well-balanced, and take steps to eat healthily to help reduce stress.

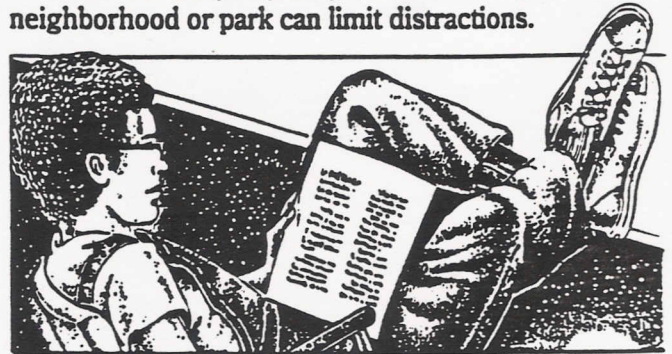


Limiting caffeine can help reduce stress.

Relax Your Emotions

Relaxing your emotions can be just as important as relaxing your body in relieving stress.

- 1. Talk.** Take the time to talk with a friend, mate or child. Express feelings you might have been holding in. Listen carefully to your partner. Walking in a quiet neighborhood or park can limit distractions.



Reading is a great escape.

- 2. Laugh.** Go to a comedy club, see a funny movie, or spend time with a funny friend.
- 3. Cry.** Crying can be as good a release as laughing. If you haven't cried in a long time, try listening to sad music, watching a sad movie or writing about a sad experience.
- 4. Read.** A good book is a great escape. Reading a tear-jerker or comedy can help release pent-up emotions.
- 5. Do something you love.** When you enjoy yourself, whether it's gardening, going to the beach, or seeing friends, you relax your emotions.

Create Stress Reducers

These are just a few stress reducers you can try. You can create your own healthy stress reducers (without alcohol or drugs), or use those listed above. You'll feel better and stay healthier if you do.