



FINDING SOLUTIONS

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Relax Your Stress Away

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 the physical and emotional tension that often follows those 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. **Box Breathing** - (20 seconds per breath). Breathe in through your nose (4-5 seconds), hold, 2, 3, 4, 5. Exhale through your mouth, 2, 3, 4, 5. Repeat 3-5 times - more when sitting or lying down.
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 from 30-minutes to 1-hour, and will work on specific areas of tension, such as the lower back or neck.
6. **Nutrition** - Reduce sugar, caffeine (coffee, black tea, chocolate), and alcohol intake. Find out if your diet is well-balanced, and take steps to eat healthier to reduce stress.

Relax Your Emotions

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

1. **Talk** - Take the time to talk with a friend or partner. Express feelings that you may have been holding in. Listen carefully to your friend or partner. Walking in a quiet neighbourhood or park can limit distractions.
2. **Laugh** - Go to a comedy club, see a funny movie, or spend time with a funny friend. Humour is a great stress-reducer.
3. **Cry** - Crying can be as good of 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. Crying also releases toxins.
4. **Read** - A good book is a great escape. Reading a tear-jerker or comedy can help release pent-up emotions. Self-help books can be helpful if they are based on good science.
5. **Do Something You love** - When you enjoy yourself, whether it's gardening, going to the beach, or seeing friends, you relax your emotions.

