

ONE MINUTE STRESS STRATEGIES

Let's make a difference in how we handle stress!

TENSION RELEASE:

Tense your muscles, one area at a time, and enjoy the relaxation upon release. Take a deep breath and hold it as you curl your toes for about 5 seconds, then let your breath go all at once. Don't ease off — let go completely!

Next clench your calves, thighs, buttocks, arms, shoulders, jaws, and finally squeeze your eyelids.

Feel the tension leave your body — Aaah!

DEEP BREATHING:

When tense, we often breathe from the upper chest. A full, deep breath helps relieve tension.

Take a deep breath, letting your abdomen expand fully.

Hold it for about 3 seconds.

Let your breath out all at once (with a sigh if you want).

As you exhale, relax your jaw and shoulders. Think calm...

FOCUSED BREATHING:

When our minds are filled with stressful thoughts, our bodies become stressed. Focusing on body processes can help calm mental activity, which in turn can result in physical relaxation. This technique will help you take a break from stressful thoughts.

With your eyes closed, shift your attention to the tip of your nose.

As you breathe in, become aware of the air entering your nostrils.

As you breathe out, be aware of the sensations of air passing back out. Do this several times.

Repeat several times: breathe in... breathe out... breathe in... breathe out...

IDEAL RELAXATION:

Picture a place (real or imagined) where you can be totally relaxed.

With your eyes closed, take a moment to visualize an ideal place to relax. Make it any place attractive to you.

Using all senses, feel yourself in comfortable clothes, hear pleasant sounds, see beautiful colors.

Visit this spot whenever you need to relax. Take a mini-vacation!

4-7-8 BREATHING:

Slow it down to soothe mind and body --

Exhale with sound through your mouth to the count of eight

Inhale quietly through your nose to the count of four

Hold your breath to the count of seven

Repeat for four breath cycles, and ideally twice a day

