SIMPLE WAYS TO RELIEVE STRESS
Objectives

- Learn different ways to reduce stress.
- Rate your stress level before and after using these techniques.
- Practice at least one way to reduce stress that works for you.
How Stressed Are You?

- Rate your stress **before** using a technique. You can use this Stress Scale:

  - Relaxed
  - Slightly Tense
  - Somewhat Tense
  - Very Tense
  - Extremely Tense

  1  2  3  4  5

- Also, rate your stress **after** using a technique.
Techniques You Will Learn

- Abdominal Breathing
- Guided Imagery
- Muscle Relaxation
- Music Relaxation

*A link to some guided practice with these techniques is at the end of the presentation.*
Practice the Techniques

- Practice the techniques several times a day when you are **NOT STRESSED**.

- Then, when you feel stress, use a technique that works for you.
Abdominal Breathing

- This is a kind of deep breathing that is relaxing. It is also good for your health.

- Never hold your breath so long that you feel uncomfortable or dizzy.
Abdominal Breathing

STEP 1

- Lie down or sit in a chair.
- Put one hand on your upper chest. Put the other hand on your upper stomach.
Abdominal Breathing

STEP 2

- Breathe in slowly and deeply.
  - Focus on filling your lungs with air from the bottom to the top.
  - Make sure that your hand on your stomach rises higher than the one on your chest.

- Hold breath for up to a count of 7 (or less if you have discomfort).
Abdominal Breathing

STEP 3

- Slowly breathe out to a count of 8.
  - Focus on getting all the air out of your lungs.

- Your stomach should pull in as you breathe out.

- Your jaw, shoulders, and arms should feel loose and limp.
Abdominal Breathing

STEP 4

- Repeat these steps 5 times.
  - Leave a 10 second break between deep breaths.

- As you practice, you can start saying relaxing phrases.
  - Words like “Peace,” “Love” or “Let Go” are relaxing to some people.
  - Pick a word or phrase, and say it as you breathe out.
Guided Imagery

- Think of a place that makes you feel calm and relaxed.
- Close your eyes.
- Take a few deep breaths.
- Picture your calm place in your mind.
- What’s it like there?
  - Use all of your senses.
  - Try to see, hear, smell, taste, and feel everything in your calm place.
Guided Imagery

- Spend a few minutes to take in the feeling of calmness.
- When you feel refreshed, slowly bring yourself back to the present.
- Count to 3 and then open your eyes.
Muscle Relaxation

- Find a comfortable place to lie down.
  - Take your shoes off.
  - Loosen your clothing.
- Close your eyes.
Muscle Relaxation

- Breathe slowly and deeply.
- Notice any parts of your body that feel tense or uncomfortable.
  - Focus your energy on relaxing those parts of your body as you breathe.
- Now start with your head.
  - Focus on the way your forehead, cheeks, and jaw feel.
Muscle Relaxation

- Slowly tighten the muscles.
  - Squeeze as tight as you can.

- Then, relax the muscles.
  - Let the tightness flow away.
  - Your face should feel relaxed and may be warm or tingly.

- Stay in this state of calmness for a moment.
  - Keep your breaths deep and slow.
Muscle Relaxation

- Next, focus on your neck muscles.
  - Do the same steps to relax the muscles in your neck.

- Then, move your focus downward.
  - Tighten and relax the muscles of every part of your body as you go.
Music Relaxation

- Lie down or sit in your favorite chair.
- Close your eyes.
- Breathe slowly and deeply.
- Listen to music that is soothing.
- Let your mind and body relax with the soothing sounds.
Let’s try it!

- Below is a link you can listen to.
- Someone will guide you in these techniques:
  - Deep breathing
  - Guided imagery
  - Muscle relaxation exercises

**Click on the highlighted link below for guided practice with these techniques!**

Other Stress Relievers

- **Journaling.**
  - Write down your thoughts and feelings about a stressful event.
  - This will help you work out what is bothering you.

- **Massage.**
  - Get a massage to ease your tension.

- **Aroma Therapy.**
  - Scented candles, lotions, or oils can relieve stress.
  - Lavender, rosemary and ylang-ylang’s are soothing scents.
  - Search for the scent that works best for you.
Exercise: Another Stress Reliever

- Try physical exercises like Yoga, Tai Chi, swimming or cycling.
- Look for free classes in your local newspaper or public library.
- Even walking can reduce your stress.

*You don’t need a gym membership to exercise!*
References


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