

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Adopting the right attitude can convert a negative stress into a positive one.”

- HANS SELYE



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FEATURED ARTICLE

Finding Balance: Easy Relaxation Techniques

Relieve your stress with these simple, effective methods for relaxation.

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FEATURED ACTIVITY

Quiz Time: Keep Your Cool

Learn how to be calm, cool, and collected with a quick quiz!

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FEATURED LIVE WEBINARS

August Live Webinars

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FEATURED ARTICLE

Finding Balance: Easy Relaxation Techniques You Can Use

Relieve your stress with these simple, effective methods for relaxation.

“Just relax.” What is it about that well-intended advice—usually suggested when you’re tearing your hair out—that makes you do just the opposite? You can thank the body’s built-in response to stress, which elevates hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol and puts the body in a heightened state of awareness. This response can be good when stress is short-term (it’s what helps you swerve to avoid an accident), but can take a toll when stress is an ongoing part of your life. The good news is, you can

help deflect the stress response by learning techniques that help you relax. Here are some easy techniques to help you get started.

Temper your temper. We’ve all been there. Something or someone sets you off, tempers flare, arguing begins and nobody listens to the other side. Anger is stressful and usually unproductive. So the next time you’re feeling super-steamed, take a moment to check in with yourself before you respond.

Harness the power of mental imagery. Try this quick activity when you’re feeling stressed. Focus your attention inward and

breathe consciously and deeply. Take a few moments to conjure up a memory of something you appreciate or a setting you enjoy. Walk through the sights, sounds and smells of this image. Imagine yourself in the scene. What are you doing? Who are you with? What are you feeling? After a few minutes, bring yourself back to the present with a calm mind and peaceful approach.

Breathe into your belly. Have you ever watched babies breathe? They practice full-body breathing, where the abdomen pops out on the inhale and again at the end of the exhale. But most of us don't breathe that way, and most adults also have a bad habit of holding our breath for seconds at a time, up to 100 times a day. Guilty?

Try this: Take a five-minute breathing break every day to relax and reconnect. Sit in a comfy chair. Close your eyes and place your hand lightly on your stomach. Take a few deep, conscious breaths beginning with the exhale. Focus on breathing in and out of your belly. Feel your hand move in and out with your breath. For the next few minutes, it's the only thing you have to do: breathe.

Rub out your worries. If you've ever rubbed your head to ease a headache, you've practiced acupressure without realizing it. Acupressure is an ancient healing art, and self-acupressure has been shown to help relieve stress symptoms. Applying self-acupressure to the following three areas may promote relaxation.

Hands: To release stress and strain, rub your palms together in a circular motion. Lace your fingers together and knead the backs of your hands with your fingertips. Use your thumbs to knead your palms.



Head: Move your hands from your chin to your cheeks, using a circular motion as though you're washing your face. Guide your fingers to your temples and rub gently. Move to the back of your head and start to massage, working your fingers upward to the top of your head.

Feet: Find a comfortable chair and rest one foot on your knee. Rub the entire bottom of your foot, from heel to toe, in a circular motion. Repeat on the other foot.

Breathe deeply to go back to sleep.

If you can't sleep because of your chattering mind, practice this technique. Try slow breathing while you count softly out loud from 1 to 10 and back again. This is deceptively effective, as it's hard to count and think at the same time. Say "One," then inhale for three counts. Say "Relax" and breathe out for three counts. Repeat to 10, then back to 1 again. 🌿

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FEATURED ACTIVITY

Quiz Time: Keep Your Cool

“Keep Your Cool” in more ways than one with a few questions from this quiz program — appearing this month on CaféWell. Check the answer key for correct answers and explanations.

1. Keeping your mind focused on the present can reduce anxiety.

True

False

2. You can create an instant calming effect in your body by:

- A. Staring at florescent lights
- B. Counting breaths
- C. Surfing the internet
- D. Watching television

3. When the air is humid, you’re more likely to overheat.

True

False

4. For long workouts, sports drinks can help maintain your body’s balance of:

- A. Vitamins
- B. Electrolytes
- C. Musclemania
- D. Glucose

5. The practice of sequentially contracting and relaxing different muscle groups is called:

- A. Muscle tension release
- B. Numerical muscle dispersal
- C. Progressive muscle relaxation
- D. Muscle on, muscle off

Answer Key

1. **True** — Our minds have a tendency to dwell on the past or stress about the future. Focusing on what’s happening in the moment helps prevent negative thoughts from spiraling out of control.

2. **Counting breaths (B)** — Deep breathing exercises can trick your body into releasing calming hormones. Next time you feel overwhelmed, try counting to three with each inhale and exhale.

3. **True** — When it’s hot and sticky out, you’ll want to be more mindful of your body, and consume a bit more water. The cooling effects of sweating are reduced because sweat doesn’t evaporate as easily as it does in dry air.

4. **Electrolytes (B)** — If you work out for more than an hour, a sports drink with sodium, potassium, and carbohydrates will help replace the electrolytes your body used, and give you a little extra energy boost. Be mindful of the amount you consume since these drinks usually contain sugar.

5. **Progressive muscle relaxation (C)** — Perform this exercise while lying on your back. Breath in through your nose and hold the inhale for a few seconds while contracting a specific muscle group; then release with an exhale through your mouth. Try starting with your toes, moving up toward your head.



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