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Stress: Relaxation Techniques For A Healthy Mindset

Everyone must deal with stress. Some situations or seasons of life may be more stressful than others, but it's impossible to avoid altogether.

It is important to do what you can to minimize your stress level because prolonged periods of high stress can contribute to health problems such as:

- Anxiety
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Headaches
- Heart issues
- High blood pressure

- Sleep disruption
- Stomach upset
- Weakened immune system

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration recognizes work-related stress as a recordable contributing factor to conditions such as anxiety and depression.

It's important to avoid stress as much as possible, but for dealing with unavoidable stress, many relaxation techniques help reduce stress.

Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy involves using essential oils for a therapeutic benefit. Scent molecules in essential oils travel directly to the amygdala, which is the emotional center of the brain, where they can work almost instantly to bring down stress levels in your body.

Among the best essential oils for stress relief are:

- Bergamot
- Frankincense
- Lavender
- Roman chamomile
- Vetiver
- Ylang Ylang

Using essential oils for aromatherapy can be as simple as putting a drop on a diffuser necklace or running an ultrasonic diffuser with your favorite calming oils. Click [here](#) to know more about essential oils for relaxation.

Art Therapy

Creative outlets can lower stress levels and even help you process the emotions or experiences that cause your stress.

Studies on art therapy have shown that people with new creative outlets have increased levels of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that helps you feel happy and is often low in people with anxiety, depression, and excess stress.

It has also been found that people engaging in art therapy have lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol. According to a study, 75% of participants who spent 45 minutes creating art experienced a reduction in cortisol levels.

You can do art therapy with the aid of a licensed therapist, or you can pick up a coloring book at home and see if it helps you feel more peaceful.

There is no pressure to create an amazing work of art during art therapy. It is more about the process and allowing yourself to relax, create, and get your mind off whatever may be stressing you.

If you don't know how to start, try some of these entry-level artistic mediums which require little investment:

- Drawing – pen and paper
- Coloring – coloring book and markers or colored pencils
- Collage – paper, glue, scissors, and old magazines
- Zendoodling – paper and pens

You can also look into other creative options like music, drama, or dance therapies.

Breathing

Breathing exercises can benefit multiple situations. You can practice them daily for overall stress reduction, and you can use them if you find yourself in a stressful situation during your day.

Just taking deep breaths – filling your lungs fully and expanding your belly – is calming, but you can also practice specific breathing techniques, such as box breathing:

- Inhale for the count of four
- Hold your breath for the count of four
- Exhale for the count of four
- Hold with lungs empty for the count of four
- Repeat at least four times

Or you can try the 4-7-8 breath technique:

- Inhale for the count of four
- Hold for the count of seven
- Exhale slowly for the count of eight
- Repeat

Practicing these techniques every day will help them be more natural when you find yourself in a situation where you need them.

Meditation

Meditation is a practice of focused concentration that can address stress and give you a sense of peace, calm, and balance. It can also refocus your attention from your stressful situation to something calming.

There are many different types of meditation you can choose from, but they will generally include:

- Comfortable position
- Focused attention
- Open attitude
- Quiet setting
- Relaxed breathing

Keep in mind that there is no “right” way to meditate. Choose a guided meditation if that is easiest for you, or make it your own.

The benefits of meditation don’t end when you stop meditating either. Meditating in the morning can mean that you feel calmer and more peaceful throughout the entire day.

Yoga

Yoga combines movement, poses, breathing, and meditation for an experience that aims to enhance inner peace.

People of nearly any fitness level can enjoy yoga, and it can be done in a group setting or alone at home. The only equipment needed to get started is a yoga mat and some comfortable clothing.

Conclusion

Many relaxation techniques help reduce stress, either as part of a daily routine or during the times when you feel especially stressed. Try several different techniques and choose the ones that bring you the most peace. Keep in mind that being familiar with multiple techniques will likely bring you more relief than any single one.