

QUICK Relaxations

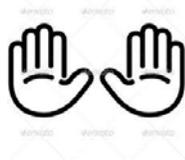
Do you notice when you are tense?

Sometimes we don't notice we are stressed - we gradually become used to the feelings of living in a tense state and just think of it as normal.

Here are some clues that may help you to spot unhealthy levels of tension:

- **tense, tight muscles**
- **heart racing or pounding**
- **tightness in chest**
- **hyperventilating; feeling light-headed or faint**
- **persistent tiredness or exhaustion**
- **aches and pains**
- **difficulty with sleep (falling asleep or waking up in the night)**
- **waking up tired**
- **loss of appetite or not eating well, perhaps with stomach in knots**
- **binge eating**
- **developing headaches, migraines or stomach upsets**
- **mind in a whirl; can't think straight, concentrate or work effectively**
- **sense of rush and pressure, lack of time, feeling impatient with others**

Here are some quick things to do when you notice that you feel anxious or stressed:



Hands

Stretch out your hands so that your fingers are straight and spread out. Hold that position for a moment and feel the tension across your palms and the back of your hands. Feel the warmth spreading across the palms. Then let your hands relax and hang beside you, or sit loosely on your lap. Resist the urge to hold onto something; just let them hang loosely beside you, or let them rest on your lap.

Count Breaths

- Take several slow, deep breaths from your belly. Place your hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall with each breath. Count your breath in 1-2-3-4-5, hold for 2 counts and breath out slowly for 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 counts. Repeat 10 times.
- Count down slowly from 20 to 0. Take a slow, deep breath IN on 20, then breath OUT slowly on 19, IN on 18, OUT on 17, and so on.
- Rub your palms together for a few seconds, until they are warm. Then place your hands gently over your eyes. Feel the warmth and take deep, slow breaths in and out, saying “I AM” on the in breath, and “CALM” on the out breath. Do this 10 times.

Quickie Relaxer

1. Close your eyes and draw your attention and concentration inward.
2. Imagine you are smiling inwardly with your mouth and eyes.
3. **Say to yourself "Alert mind. calm body."**
4. As you exhale, let your jaw, tongue, and shoulders go loose.
5. Feel a wave of warmth and heaviness sweep down to your toes.
6. Enjoy the feeling of peace and relaxation that this brings.
7. Open your eyes and resume your activities, taking this peacefulness with you.

3-Second Relaxer

Take deep breath. Hold it for 3 seconds. Then, as you let it out, all at once, let your jaw and shoulders relax. Hang loose and continue breathing easily. Do it once again.

Cool Air In - Warm Air Out

- * With your eyes closed, **focus on the tip of your nose.**
- * As you **breathe in**, feel the air coming in your nostrils.
- * As you **breathe out**, feel the air coming out of the tip of your nostrils.

Perhaps you can even feel that the air coming out is cooler than the air going out. Just be aware of air in, air out. Just notice.

Stress Ball

Squeeze a firm rubber ball or a coosh ball with texture in your hand for three seconds and then release. Repeat this 10 times in each hand and your tension will slowly dissipate as your muscles relax. You may wish to keep this in your pocket or purse for stressful meetings or situations. You can find these in toy stores & sports stores.