

The Calm, Cool and Collected Worker:

**How to manage Your Time, Organize Your Space
and Ultimately Control Your Stress**



*New York State
Office of Temporary
and Disability Assistance*



BROOKDALE CENTER
for Healthy Aging & Longevity

Developed under contractual agreement between the
New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

and the

Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging & Longevity of Hunter College
The City University of New York

October 2008

ASSESSING YOUR PROFESSIONAL GROOVE

TASK: Who are you? In the areas below please take the time to identify how you use your time

1. Do you prefer to e-mail or talk to someone face to face? Why?

2. Do you prefer to do the least desirable things first or last? Why?

3. What time of the day do you have your best energy? Why?

4. What stirs your creative juices? (*In other words, what motivates you?*)

5. Do you prefer to work in a team or individually? Why?

6. What challenges, if any, do you face when you work with friends?

7. What messages about time did you receive growing up?

8. Do you manage your time better at home or at work?

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN MANAGING YOUR TIME EFFECTIVELY?

Commitment:

You must decide how serious you are about using your time more effectively. If you are uncomfortable with the way you currently go about completing tasks, organizing your day, meeting deadlines, etc., you will probably want to contract with yourself to implement some of these techniques. You may want to begin a time management program at a later date. The decision is yours. If you do decide to follow a time management tip or two, do so consistently for a minimum of 30 days. By that time you will have formed a new habit; one that is beneficial to you.

Analysis:

Explore how you are currently using your time. Are there patterns in your behavior? Are you more effective in the morning or in the evening? Are there days of the week that are busier than others? Analyzing how you use your time will help you to know where you need to make changes in how you do things. It will also help you to see where your strengths are in managing your day. A time log is an excellent tool for doing this.

Planning:

It is important to routinely establish blocks of quiet time to plan your activities. Initially, set aside a solid block of 5-6 hours (this only happens once) to list out all the "to-do's" that never seem to happen. Once you've done that, schedule 30-45 minutes once a week (Sunday evening is good) to plan the entire week. Lastly, use 10-15 minutes daily (preferably in the morning) to "lock-in the day" by adding things that have come up since your weekly planning.

Follow-Up and Re-analysis:

Periodically, you will need to review how your time management plan is doing. Are you keeping a prioritized "To-Do" list as you had planned? Is using an organizer working more effectively for you? Whatever your personal commitment was, re-analysis allows you to check-up on yourself. Reinforce what's working for you: tweak or discard what is not. Initially 30 day blocks are convenient check-in points. Eventually you won't need to do them as often.

HOW DO YOU USE YOUR 168 HOURS?

TASK: Place a check in the column that best describes how you feel or act. Then, review your responses and focus on each item to see if it represents an opportunity to improve your management of time on the job.

	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely
1. Do you normally spend time the way you really want to?			
2. Do you often feel harried, and obligated to do things you really don't want to do?			
3. Do you feel a sense of accomplishment from your work?			
4. Do you work longer hours than your colleagues?			
5. Do you regularly take work home? (evenings or weekends)			
6. Do you feel stress because of too much work?			
7. Do you feel guilty about your performance at work?			
8. Do you consider your job to be fun?			
9. Can you find blocks of uninterrupted time when you need to?			
10. Do you feel in control about the way you use your time?			
11. Do you maintain a regular exercise program?			
12. Do you take vacations or long weekends as often as you would like?			
13. Do you put off doing the difficult, boring or unpleasant parts of your job?			
14. Do you feel you must always be busy doing something productive?			
15. Do you feel guilty when you occasionally goof off?			
16. Do the demands of residents affect your ability to manage your time effectively?			

TIPS FOR HANDLING TIME WASTERS

★ SELF-GENERATED	★ ENVIRONMENTAL
<p>Disorganization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a place for everything • Evaluate your workspace • Use one organizer • Practice completing tasks 	<p>Visitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-position desk • Close door • Stand up to talk • Meet with colleague in his/her area
<p>Procrastination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a place for everything • Evaluate your workspace • Use one organizer • Practice completing tasks 	<p>Telephone Calls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have calls screened/use voice mail • Limit social conversation • Delegate appropriate return phone calls
<p>Inability To Say No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer an alternative • Indicate when you can say yes • Practice ways of saying no 	<p>Mail/Paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegate sorting responsibility • Use your vertical file/folder system • Handle each piece of paper one time only • Write response on original letter
<p>Attitude/Lack of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for ways to make work interesting • Negotiate a different assignment • Follow procrastination suggestions 	<p>Crises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review past crises/Make contingency plans • Consider alternative processes
<p>Inability to Keep Other People's Monkeys' Off Your Back</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not let other people's problems become your problems • Set boundaries 	<p>Meetings (You Call)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep attendees to a minimum • Send agendas beforehand • Establish beginning/ending times • Summarize/Plan for follow-up
<p>Ineffective Delegation</p> <p>Delegator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly state what you want and how you want it done • Specify decision making authority <p>Delegatee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask clarifying questions. • If you don't understand—say so! 	<p>Meetings (You Attend)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm necessity of your attendance • Be on time • Participate/keep notes • Clarify your follow-up responsibilities

WHAT CONTROLS YOUR TIME?

We expend enormous amounts of time and energy trying to control people, things and situations, that are not ours to control. To become more effective at managing the time you have, it is important that you recognize the following limitations:

1. There are events that we cannot control.
2. There are events that we think we cannot control, but we can.
3. There are events we can control, but we don't.
4. There are events we think we can control, but we can't.
5. There are events we think we can control, and we do.

You will know that you are effectively managing your time, when you are primarily focusing on those events which you can control.

THREE TESTS OF TIME

When analyzing how you presently use your time, or when deciding whether or not you are going to handle a specific task, learn to apply the following three tests:

1. The Test of Necessity

Does this task have to be done?

2. The Test of Appropriateness

If it does have to be done, am I the one who must do it?

3. The Test of Efficiency

If I do have to do it, what is the best, most efficient way to go about it?

PLANNING YOUR WORK AND WORKING YOUR PLAN

TO-DO-LIST

- Make a list of tasks for each day.
- Try to break larger tasks into smaller tasks.
- Prioritize.
- Try to keep list on computer
- Put phone numbers of calls directly on list.
- Put some “chippies” (easy shots) on your list so you can get your groove going with a sense of accomplishment.
- Make a list that is realistic—consider the unexpected.
- Schedule some to-do time for things you enjoy!

SCHEDULING

- Identify the time you have available.
- Block in the essential tasks you must carry out to succeed in your job.
- Schedule in high priority, urgent tasks and vital "house-keeping" activities.
- Block in appropriate contingency time to handle unpredictable interruptions.
- In the time that remains, schedule the activities that address your priorities and personal goals.
- Oh those meetings!—do you really have to be at all of them???
- Remember to be realistic!!—consider the environment.
- Calendars:
 - Use only one
 - Transfer all important information to one calendar

THE PAPER AVALANCHE

I. The “Handle-Paper-Once” Game

Picture this...

A person reads a memo, moves it to another side of his desk; spots it an hour later and reads it again; puts it in a pile and subsequently reads it again... each time moving paper from one side of the desk to another.

This happens to many of us not only at work, but at home. We read a letter and, instead of acting on it, put it on the shelf, read it a second, third time... and then act. Valuable time is wasted.

To save time:

When you handle a sheet of paper, act on it at once. Don't put it aside! Do something with it now...

- File it.
- Respond to it.
- Prioritize it (A,B,C).
- Throw it out.

Do something with it! Handle it once... and act on it immediately!

II. Memos and What-Not

MAKE NOTES RIGHT AFTER YOU READ AN INCOMING WRITTEN COMMUNICATION.

When you read a letter or memo, read it *actively*. As you understand what the writer is saying, *make notes in the margin*.

The writer's purpose or main idea, for example, usually appears in the opening paragraph. So, in the margin, *summarize the purpose* in a few words.

The supporting details, facts, and examples should follow. Write “S.D.” in the margin next to these specific details.

The writer's conclusion or action statement usually appears last. *Circle it...*
Make it stand out.

So, what you've done is:

1. Actively read for a purpose.
2. Summarized key points of the written communication.
3. Noted the conclusion, acted on it, and gone to the next assignment.
4. Eliminated the step of having to *re-read* the document.

Don't read and re-read and then eventually act on a memo. Do it all in one step. Multiply this procedure times the many pieces of correspondence you receive, and you'll save plenty of time.

III. File Management

- Clearly label
- Color coded might help
- Daily usage – reachable
- Periodic usage – must stand to get
- Infrequent usage – must walk to get
- Review and purge

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

- Do regular self assessments regarding your use of time.
- Allot time for the unexpected.
- Reduce time spent on phone calls.
- Identify your own “time wasters”.
- Break larger tasks into more manageable parts.
- Have daily to do lists that best match your preference and style.
- Creatively and assertively look for ways to lessen your time in meetings
- Be in touch with your body and mind---what time of day do you do your best work?
- Can you have your attendance staggered at meetings?
- Ask your supervisor what is expected of you—ask them to help you prioritize—it is a supervisor’s job to do so!
- Be proactive and not reactive as much as possible.
- Who do you really need to “give your time to”?
- Plan time to relax—nurture yourself.
- “Find a way” to see your to-do list as exciting and attractive.

WHAT IS STRESS?

Many people don't realize it, but stress is a very natural and important part of life. Without stress there would be no life at all. Stress is everywhere: in the workplace, in the home, in the streets. At no time in history has stress been so much discussed nor considered such a problem. In a survey (Careerbuilders.com) of 1,400 workers, more than one-third of respondents stated they experienced an increase in their workload. They claim they are working longer hours and taking shorter lunch breaks to get the job done.

In defining stress, there are three terms to consider: stress, distress and eustress. Dr. Hans Selye, the father of stress research, defines stress as "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it". Stress, or the stress response, is triggered by a stressor, which is any stimulus, internal or external, with the potential to set off a physiological fight-flight response. Stress reactivity is the individual's tendency in the moment to be vulnerable to stress by perceiving an event as a stressor (positive or negative)

Eustress, positive stress, helps keep us alert, motivates us to face challenges, and drives us to solve problems. These low levels of stress are manageable and can be thought of as necessary and normal stimulation. Distress, on the other hand, results when our bodies over-react to events. It is this negative stress that leads to burnout and illness. It is associated with a lack of control or powerlessness.

Our body is designed to react to both types of stress. It is how we perceive and interpret the events of life that dictates how our bodies react. Learning stress management coping skills assists us in modifying our over-reactions to situations.

Glossary

Stress (stress response): “the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it”.

Stressor: any stimulus, internal or external, positive or negative, with the potential to set off a physiological fight-flight response.

Stress reactivity: the individual’s tendency in the moment to be vulnerable to stress by perceiving an event as a stressor.

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WHAT IS BURNOUT?

The term “burnout” conveys the idea of a once vigorous energy extinguished - fiery enthusiasm doused to a gray spread of lifeless ash. Burnout is caused by factors such as job stress, worker strain, and psychological resignation (evasion, as opposed to confrontation). Specifically, burnout denotes the disengagement of a previously committed worker from his/her work, as a response to stress and strain experienced in his/her job.

Burnout is almost inevitable in any kind of work setting, but the individual’s characteristics may, instead of alleviate stress augment it. A person’s personality traits, career-related goals and attitudes, accumulated stress from previous experiences, and the quality of his/her personal life all influence the amount of job stress he/she will experience, and how he/she will confront problems he/she is faced with.

Burnout adversely affects clients and the organizational effectiveness of social service agencies. A worker who is “burnt out” loses concern for clients, as well as a loss of positive regard for co-workers, and the agency to which he/she belongs. He/she is emotionally withdrawn from his/her work. When a worker burns out, what was once his formerly exciting and encouraging job becomes a dull and uninspiring routine.

Worker burnout is induced by a broad spectrum of factors. Contributory causes to the burnout effect range from flaws in the individual, to flaws in our society.

PERSONAL STRESS ASSESSMENT

This survey is for your eyes only. Read each statement below. At the right of the statement fill in the number that most accurately reflects how you feel or what you believe. Use the following rating scale:

1 = Never	2 = Seldom	3 = Occasionally	4 = Frequently	5 = Always
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<i>You...</i>	<i>Rating</i>
1) Have trouble getting out of bed in the morning and facing the day.	
2) Feel sad, anxious, or depressed on the way to work.	
3) Have trouble starting work in the morning or after lunch.	
4) Have a lack of energy during the workday.	
5) Find yourself frequently getting sleepy or nodding off during the workday.	
6) Daydream or have trouble focusing on the task at hand.	
7) Attempt to stay isolated from others while at work.	
8) Dread attending meetings.	
9) Suddenly burst into tears.	
10) Feel overwhelmed by the amount of work.	
11) Believe no one cares about you or your work.	
12) Believe your work is boring.	
13) Believe you are underpaid.	
14) Think you are not contributing during the day.	
15) Feel little job satisfaction.	
16) Have trouble meeting deadlines.	
17) Avoid or postpone making important job-related decisions.	

18) Feel exhausted at the end of the workday.	
19) Are a couch potato at home after work.	
20) Have trouble sleeping at night.	
<i>Add the numbers you placed after each item to obtain a total score.</i>	
TOTAL SCORE:	

INTERPRETING YOUR SCORE

85 -100	You are highly burned out and filled with great stress. You must undertake a stress reduction program immediately, both on and off the job, or risk sickness and disease. Consider counseling. If you have not had a physical exam in the last year, make an appointment with your doctor immediately.
70 - 84	You are undergoing high to high-moderate levels of stress and rapidly approaching burnout. A stress reduction program is suggested, both during the workday and after it. Changes in your work situation should be discussed with your supervisor in order to prevent burnout.
55 - 69	You may not realize it or feel it, but you still have a good possibility of job burnout. Some form of stress reduction is still indicated to rejuvenate yourself each day and prevent burnout.
40 - 54	You are not under great stress and are not prone to burnout. Just be aware of the stress levels at the end of each day, and take action if and when needed.

Losyk, Bob. *Get a Grip! Overcoming Stress and Thriving in the Workplace*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2005

JOB CONDITIONS THAT MAY LEAD TO STRESS

On the basis of experience and research, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) favors the view that working conditions play a primary role in causing job stress. However, individual and situational factors can intervene to strengthen or weaken this influence. Listed below are job conditions that may lead to stress:

Conditions	Explanation	Example
Design of Tasks	Heavy workload, infrequent rest breaks, long work hours; hectic and routine tasks that have little inherent meaning, so not utilize worker's skills, and provide little sense of control.	Ellen works to the point of exhaustion. Mike is tied to the computer, allowing little room for flexibility, self-initiative, or rest.
Management Style	Lack of participation by workers in decision-making, poor communication in the organization, lack of family-friendly policies.	Tina needs to get boss's approval for everything, and the organization is insensitive to her family needs.
Interpersonal Relationships	Poor social environment and lack of support or help from coworkers and supervisors.	William's physical isolation reduces his opportunities to interact with other workers or receive help from them.
Work Roles	Conflicting or uncertain job expectations, too much responsibility, too many "hats to wear".	Blanche is often caught in a difficult situation trying to satisfy both the worker's needs and the organization's expectations.
Career Concerns	Job insecurity and lack of opportunity for growth, advancement or promotion; rapid changes for which workers are unprepared.	Since the reorganization of Arthur's unit, everyone is worried about their future with the organization and what will happen next.
Environmental Conditions	Unpleasant or dangerous physical conditions such as crowding, noise, air pollution, or ergonomic problems.	Brenda is exposed to constant noise at work.

Warning Signs of Worker Burnout

1. Chronic fatigue
2. Anger at those making demands
3. Self-criticism for putting up with demands
4. Cynicism, negativity and irritability
5. A sense of being besieged
6. Exploding easily at seemingly inconsequential things
7. Frequent headaches and gastrointestinal disturbances
8. Weight gain or loss
9. Sleeplessness and depression
10. Suspiciousness
11. Shortness of breath
12. Feelings of helplessness
13. Increased degree of risk taking

Tips on How to Fight Burnout

- Limit the number of working hours
- Written set of goals
- Learn to say no
- Learn to delegate
- Exercise
- Break routine
- Take vacations
- Spend more time with family and friends
- Take time for yourself
- Do not take life too seriously

STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUES

Since stress is here to stay, we need to learn to live with it. Three techniques can help us live with stress:

Technique #1: SHORT-CIRCUITING

Short-circuiting is based on the simple truth that something is not stressful unless we allow it to be. You short-circuit when you redefine potentially stressful events psychologically (cognitive restructuring). Changing how you perceive a stressor is another way of short-circuiting. How we view events can affect how we react to them.

Tool: Perception Shift Process

Technique #2: AVOIDANCE

Often you may not know which activities are creating stress in your life. Or you may blame one stressful activity, when half-a-dozen are contributing to your discomfort. Taking time to assess the activities that cause the most stress can lead to important behavioral decisions that improve your life. *Tool: Stress Pattern Analysis*

Technique #3: MITIGATION

While we can't prevent stress altogether, there are techniques we can use to help our bodies tolerate stress better and return to a normal state more quickly. By using these techniques, your body can more easily handle the stress that you can't avoid or short-circuit. *Refer to the Toolkit in your Participant Manual.*

Stanford University Media Solutions, *Preventing and Managing Stress*, 2001

THE PERCEPTION SHIFT PROCESS

Research at the Institute of HeartMath show that the amount of stress you feel is based more on your perception of a person, place or event, than on the event itself. In the past you may have been told, “Stop and count to ten” or “Think positively”. Or today you may hear an expression like “Chill”. Counting to ten may help you cool down for a moment, but it doesn’t change your perception of the person or situation. Chances are, by the count of eleven, you’ve reengaged, and are caught up in the same emotional spiral.

Using the Perception Shift Process can help you short-circuit stressors. Changing your perception of the stressor causes an immediate and profound shift in how you view the situation you are in, breaking the stress cycle at its source. You begin the process by taking the opportunity to make on-the-spot attitude adjustments so life doesn’t trap you in an emotional rollercoaster.

PERCEPTION SHIFT PROCESS

PHASE 1: FREEZE (Be still)	Detach yourself from the situation. Gives you the conscious ability to see yourself and the situation.
PHASE 2: OBSERVE (What is happening?)	Get in tune with what you are feeling. Increases your understanding of what is going on and how it relates to you.
PHASE 3: RETHINK (Now what?)	Determine how you should proceed. What can you do to redefine or ignore the stressor?
PHASE 4: MOVE (Shift gears)	Move your “new attitude” (perception) into the flow of your life.

Adapted from The Institute of HeartMath

It is the daily accumulation of little stresses that take more of a toll on your health than the major stressful events in life. How drained you are from the daily stresses also determines how much resilience you have when a real crisis occurs. Unless you learn to neutralize these reactions as they occur, they stack up and drain your health and clarity, leading to more compounded stress.

WORKSHEET: STRESS PATTERN ANALYSIS

The first step to managing stress is identifying stressors, and gathering information about your responses.

TASK #1:

Think of four situations and/or events that cause stress. Consider the questions below (i.e. interactions with difficult people.) Complete the Stress Pattern Chart below.

- When did it occur?
- What was the situation? Who was there? Where did it happen?
- Rate your distress level, using a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “minimal distress”, and 5 being “extreme distress.”
- How did you respond? (Thoughts? Feelings? Actions?)

STRESS PATTERN CHART

When	<i>Situation/Event</i>	<i>Distress Level</i>	<i>Response</i>

Discover stress patterns by analyzing what the situations have in common. From your analysis you can begin developing plans for managing stress. Are there situations you can avoid? Perhaps you can anticipate stressing events and prepare for the encounter? How might you respond more effectively to stressors?

TASK #2:

Review your Stress Pattern Chart and looking for behavior patterns (your responses to stressors).

1) What types of situations appear to trigger a stress response?

2) What generalizations can you make about the times and situations that were distressing?

3) Are there any specific characteristics that all or many of those situations share?

4) Are deadlines a frequent cause for panic?

5) Is there a particular person or situation that appears several times?

6) What type of response(s) do you use most frequently?

7) Do you resort to a specific activity when you feel anxious? (i.e. eating, drinking, smoking, etc.)

8) Do you avoid/evade certain situations?

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Strategies	Tips & Tools
Diet	<p>If you are feeling hungry when you should not be, the real culprit could be stress. You may be a stress eater if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Eat when you have a crisis going on in your life. ▶ Feel eating helps you to cope with problems. ▶ Eat when you feel things are too much for you to handle. ▶ Resort to eating to relieve anxiety in social situations <p>Just the action of eating for some people produces a comforting feeling when they are under stress or when they feel depressed, lonely, or bored. The secret to combating stress-related eating is to eat the right foods at the right time. By eating properly, you will have more energy, control your weight, as well as handle stress more effectively</p> <p><u>Tools:</u> <i>You Are What You Eat Quiz; The Calm Diet</i></p>
Sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Keep a regular bedtime. ▶ Be active during the day. ▶ Relax with a book, music or television first. ▶ Avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol. ▶ See your physician for chronic insomnia.
Exercise	<p>When you are under stress and tension at work, your muscles contract, but not to the degree they would if you needed to fight someone or run away from a threat, as our primitive ancestors did. Although the threat is different your body prepares itself for a physical response when stress triggers it. Exercise helps our bodies get rid of the by-products created by the physical stress response. It decreased the stress hormones that are released throughout the workday.</p> <p><u>Tools:</u> <i>Deep Breathing; Progressive Muscular Relaxation; Additional Destressing Tools for the Body</i></p>

Strategies	Tips & Tools
Laughter	Laughter is a form of exercise. Research indicates that laughter triggers the release of endorphins, naturally occurring analgesic chemicals that can have euphoric effects. Laughter is fun and fun is a good antidote for stress.
Relaxation	<p>Meditation is a form of relaxation or being still that enables us to release distress. Meditation liberates your mind from distracting thoughts and brings it to a state of calm. You actually detach yourself from those thoughts and make them diminish. It allows you to expand your consciousness and become aware of thoughts, feelings, and emotions so you may control them better. Meditation strengthens the appreciation of how your mind and body interact. It enables you to remain focused.</p> <p>Tools: <i>Imagery, Relaxation Response, Self-Hypnosis, The Calm Technique</i></p>

Adapted from Stanford University Media Solutions, *Preventing and Managing Stress*, 2001 and Losyk, Bob. *Get a Grip! Overcoming Stress and Thriving in the Workplace*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2005

Positive and Negative Coping Skills

Please make a list of positive and negative coping skills within your small group. Be prepared to present these lists with the larger group.

<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>

Stress Reduction Techniques



- 😊 Learning How to Relax
- 😊 Basic Dietary Guidelines
- 😊 “Desk-ercise”
- 😊 Creative Visualization

Learning How to Relax

1. Find a quiet, calm environment – one that's free of distractions.
2. Sit in a comfortable chair in as restful a position as possible. If you want to, take off your shoes and loosen your clothing.
3. Close your eyes.
4. Relax *all* muscles. Start with your feet and progress upward to your neck and head.
5. Breathe in through your nose. Tune into your breathing pattern. Inhale and as you exhale, say the word "one" silently or softly to yourself. Say the word over and over again as you exhale. The purpose of the repetitions is to free your mind of its logical, external orientation. Focus on the word "one," and your breathing rhythm. If other thoughts intrude into your mind, resist, and push them out.
Suggestion: *Don't attempt to evaluate or over-criticize your performance. It may prevent you from fully relaxing.*
6. Continue this exercise for 20 minutes. Open your eyes periodically and check your watch. *Don't set an alarm clock.* Sit quietly when you finish. Keep your eyes closed for a few minutes, and then open them. **Suggestion:** *Plan your relaxation time and don't worry about taking time out to relax. Don't neglect to practice this important procedure. You need it!*
7. Practice twice a day. You'll find that relaxation will come easier with as you exercise more often.

If you don't have 20 minutes to spare and need a quick fix- turn the next page



"The ten-second break"

Basic routine:

1. Choose a quiet, calm environment that's free of distractions.
2. Sit in a comfortable chair in as restful a position as possible.
3. Close your eyes.
4. Smile and think "*My body doesn't need this irritation or stress*"
5. Take a deep breath. Inhale and exhale for six seconds each. Repeat this process four times.
6. Take a second deep breath. Close your eyes at the height of your inhalation. Repeat 5 times. As you exhale, visualize something warm being poured into you body at the top of your head and flowing slowly down into neck, shoulders, down your spine, your arms, hands, hips, thighs, calves, ankles, feet, and out your toes. Heaviness and warmth are flowing in. Think to yourself: "*I am clam*"
7. Open you eyes



The 10 dietary guidelines

1. Eat a variety of foods.
2. Maintain your ideal weight.
3. Reduce fat and caffeine consumption.
4. Monitor cholesterol levels.
5. Eat more fiber and drink at least 8 glasses of water daily.
6. Avoid highly processed foods.
7. Avoid overeating.
8. Reduce consumption of fat and spicy foods.
9. Avoid too much sugar and sodium.
10. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.



“Desk-ercise”

Exercises for reducing stress in the office:

Denise Austin, an exercise consultant in Alexandria, Virginia, developed the following program, which is endorsed by the American College of Sports Medicine. Austin says that to maximize effectiveness, these exercises should be done in conjunction with a regular aerobic exercise program.

Fingers: With palms, spread your fingers apart as far as you can. Hold for the count of five. Relax. Repeat

Knee Kiss: Pull one leg to your chest. Grasp knee with both hands, and hold for a count of five. Repeat with opposite leg.

Back Relaxer: Sit on a chair. Bend down between your knees as far as you can. Return to upright position. Straighten and relax.

Quadriceps: Bring your legs straight out in front of your body, about 3 inches from the floor. Hold position for five seconds. Make sure you are sitting up straight.

Windmill: From a sitting position, place your feet apart on the floor. Bend over and touch your right hands to your left foot with your left hand extend up. Alternate sides. Repeat this sequence five times.

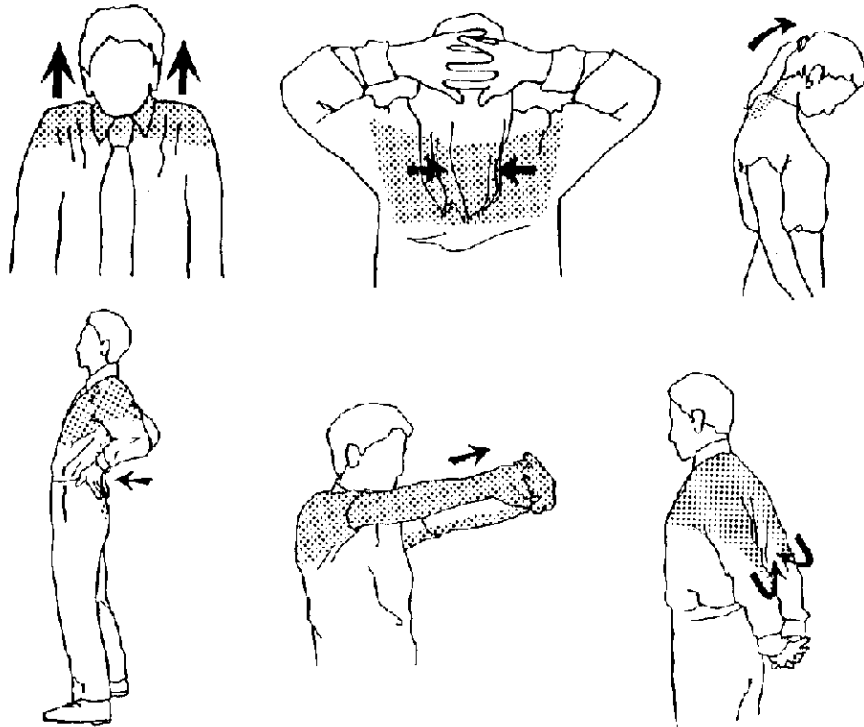
Pectoral Stretch: Grasp your hands behind your neck and press your elbows back as far as you can. Return to starting position. Then drop your arms and relax. Repeat.

Shoulder Roll: Slowly roll your shoulders forward five times in a circular motion. Then, roll your shoulders backward five times with the same circular motion.

Neck: Let your head drop slowly to your left, and then to your right. Slowly drop your chin to your chest, then raise your chin as high as you can. Turn your head to the left, then return it to the normal position, then turn it to the right.

Middle-Upper Back: Raise your right arm and grasp it below the elbow with your left hand. Gently pull your right elbow toward your left shoulder as you feel the stretch. Hold for five seconds. Repeat this process starting with your left arm.

Side Stretch: Interlock fingers. Lift your arms over your head, keeping your elbows straight. Press your arms backward as far as you can. Then, slowly lean to the left and then to the right until you can feel yourself stretching.



Creative visualization

Stress can be managed by using mental imagery. A creative vision can be anything positive – it can be a real situation, such as lying in a hammock in your backyard; or a fantasy scene, such as riding on a billowy cloud. There should be no limits.

- ◆ **A special place:** Your pleasant fantasy is a special place you can visit at any time and in any situation to relax and refuel. Just a three-to-four minute visit will have a rejuvenating effect.
- ◆ **Time your visit:** Visit your pleasant visualization just before a difficult situation, to take a break from demanding work, or to prepare for a change in activity.

Scripting your creative visualization:

Write a description of a situation you find particularly relaxing. Be detailed and specific. The more vivid the scene is in your mind, the more effective it will be in relaxing you.

Where I will be: _____

What I will see: _____

What I will hear: _____

What I will feel: _____

What I will smell: _____



Four basic steps for effective creative visualization

1. Set your goal. Decide on something you would like to have, work toward, or a place you would like to be (examples include a change in yourself, a dream vacation, a happier state of mind, a better relationship, etc.)
2. Create a clear idea or picture. Identify this ideal object, or situation, exactly as you want it. Think of it in the present tense. Include as many details as you can – sights, smells, sounds, sensations, and tastes that you didn't write on the paper.
3. Pull yourself into the situation. Imagine yourself having achieved your ideal. Notice new details that you didn't write on paper.
4. After returning from your visualization, add your new discoveries to the description of your scene:

Where I was:

What I saw:

What I heard:

What I felt:

What I smelled:



Follow-up planning

- 😊 The relaxation technique will work best if it's used in addition to the use of other stress management exercises.
- 😊 Meditating should not be a substitute for regular physical exercise. Walking, jogging, or other forms of aerobic exercise improve cardiovascular functioning.
- 😊 If you're considering an exercise program and have not been active for a while, you should consult your physician in advance.
- 😊 A balanced diet directly affects your mood and mental state. Eating healthy and nutritious foods will help you manage stress effectively by eliminating dizziness, weakness and irritability.
- 😊 Observing how other people handle stress can be useful. Talk to people who handle stressful situations well. Some of their strategies and relaxation techniques can help you.
- 😊 Don't feel guilty about taking time out to relax.
- 😊 Your meditation period will reduce your stress and probably lower your blood pressure as well. Don't forget to practice, relaxation is vital.
- 😊 The relaxation break you take each day is more valuable for your health than the coffee break or trip to the water cooler.



Laugh For the Health of It!

Use this page to make your list of 20 things you enjoy doing, especially those that make you smile and laugh. Every single day do some of the things on your list.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____