

How to Reduce Stress

www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/six-relaxation-techniques-to-reduce-stress

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We all face stressful situations throughout our lives and often times our health or the health of a loved one is the cause. It is important that we learn how to cope better with stress for the sake of our mental/physical health and well-being. Learning relaxation techniques and taking time to practice them is an excellent act of self-care. Following are six relaxation techniques that can help you evoke the relaxation response and reduce stress.

- 1. How to focus breath** – in this simple, powerful technique, you take long, slow, deep breaths (also known as abdominal or belly breathing). As you breathe, you gently disengage your mind from distracting thoughts and sensations. When you breathe in, think of it as breathing in all good things and breathe out all the stress and negative emotions.
- 2. How to scan the body** – this technique blends breath focus with progressive muscle relaxation. After a few minutes of deep breathing, you focus on one part of the body or group of muscles at a time and mentally release any physical tension you feel there.

- 3. How to use guided imagery** – for this step, you think of soothing scenes or experiences in your mind to help you relax and focus. You can find free apps and online recordings of calming scenes such as walking on a beach or through the forest.
- 4. How to use mindfulness meditation** – this practice involves sitting comfortably, focusing on your breathing, and bringing your mind's attention to the present moment without drifting into concerns about the past or the future.
- 5. How to practice Yoga, Tai chi, and Qigong** – these three ancient arts combine rhythmic breathing with a series of postures or flowing movements. The physical aspects of these practices offer a mental focus that can help distract you from racing thoughts.
- 6. How to use repetitive prayer** – for this technique, you silently repeat a short prayer or phrase from a prayer while practicing breath focus.

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You'll find a variety of free downloads and instruction pages on many of these techniques here that are appropriate for all:

www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/circle-of-health/power-of-the-mind.asp

Christian-focused meditations and prayers are offered in a variety of formats to download or view here:

www.chausa.org/newsroom/coronavirus-resources/spiritual-resources-for-covid-19/meditation

To find out more about **Stress Reducing Techniques** call Clement Manor at **(414) 546-7000** to speak with our Concierge Team. | clementmanor.com

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