



STRESS RELIEF TECHNIQUES For Adults

Instant StressBusters

Use these techniques for rapid relief whenever you're feeling stressful emotions such as fear, anger, anxiety, irritation or hurt.

Abdominal Breathing: Shift Stress Breathing Patterns

Sit, close your eyes and place your hands on your belly. Inhale through the nose and count to three while inhaling. Open the mouth with lips puckered and exhale while counting to 4 or 5.

Heart Breathing

Step 1: Heart Focus. Focus your attention on the area around your heart in the center of your chest.

Step 2: Heart Breathing. Breathe deeply but normally and imagine your breath is coming in and going out through your heart area. Continue breathing with ease until you find a natural inner rhythm that feels good to you.

Immediately Change Negative Attitudes: Attitude Breathing® tool

- Focus on your heart as you breathe in.
- Concentrate on a positive feeling or attitude as you breathe out. (try one that is opposite to the current negative attitude)
- Lock in this new feeling as you continue to breathe it in and out through your heart.

Attitude Breathing® is a registered trademark of Doc Childre.

STOP Meditation: Get Centered

STOP stands for **S**top whatever you're doing, **T**ake a breath, **O**bserve how you are, and **P**roceed with what you were doing.

It only takes a minute but you can do it throughout the day whenever you feel that you've lost your equilibrium.

Quick tension and relaxation

While standing or sitting, breathe in deeply and tense the entire body all at once while holding the breath and counting to 10. Exhale through the mouth with an audible "ahhhh".

Breath Countdown: Focus Your Mind

With eyes open or closed and hands placed on the belly (not necessary once you've mastered abdominal breathing), count down breaths from 10 to zero. Take your first inhale and when you exhale say silently "ten"; then on your next exhalation, say "nine" and so on until you have counted down to zero.



STRESS RELIEF TECHNIQUES For Adults

Let Go: Balloon Breath

Close your eyes and breathe in deeply while imagining the body receiving breath in all parts and expanding like a balloon. On the exhale, feel/see the body deflating and feel all the stress being released.

Go to Your Happy Place: Imagery

1) Close your eyes and find the most relaxed place in the body; notice if a color comes to mind when you focus there; take the feeling and color through the body starting where you are most relaxed and letting it spread from there.

OR

2) Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a very peaceful place in nature. Notice the colors and the textures. Feel the gentle breeze and the sun on your skin. Smell the fragrances. Listen for the sounds.

Balance Your Nervous System: Alternate Nostril Breathing

This breathing technique helps to balance the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems as well as the left and right hemisphere of the brain.

Use your right hand for this practice -- thumb and ring finger (tuck the index and third finger out of the way)

1) Begin closing off the right nostril with your thumb and take a deep breath through the left nostril.

2) Close off the left nostril with your ring finger and exhale through your right nostril.

3) breathe in through your right nostril

4) close off your right nostril and exhale through the left nostril.

5) breathe in through your left nostril

6) close off your left nostril and exhale through your right nostril

Continue in this pattern, switching nostrils every time you exhale. Always end your practice by exhaling through the left nostril.

Do this for 10 rounds (counting each time you inhale through the left nostril) and work your way up to 5 minutes of Alternate Nostril Breathing.

De-Stress and Balance Emotions: The Quick Coherence® Technique

Step 1: Heart Focus.

Focus your attention on the area around your heart, the area in the center of your chest. If you prefer, the first couple of times you try it, place your hand over the center of your chest to help keep your attention in the heart area.

Step 2: Heart Breathing.

Breathe deeply but normally and feel as if your breath is coming in and going out through your heart area. As you inhale, feel as if your breath is flowing in



STRESS RELIEF TECHNIQUES For Adults

through the heart, and as you exhale, feel it leaving through this area. Breathe slowly and casually, a little deeper than normal. Continue breathing with ease until you find a natural inner rhythm that feels good to you.

Step 3: Heart Feeling.

As you maintain your heart focus and heart breathing, activate a positive feeling. Recall a positive feeling, a time when you felt good inside, and try to re-experience the feeling. One of the easiest ways to generate a positive, heart-based feeling is to remember a special place you've been to or the love you feel for a close friend or family member or treasured pet. This is the most important step.

Quick Coherence® is a registered trademark of Doc Childre

Ease out of Stress: Inner-Ease™ Technique

(1) If you are stressed, acknowledge your feelings as soon as you sense that you are out of sync or engaged in common stressors— feelings such as frustration, impatience, anxiety, overload, anger, being judgmental, mentally gridlocked, etc.

(2) Take a short time out and do heart-focused breathing: breathe a little slower than usual; pretend you are breathing through your heart or chest area. *(This is proven to help create coherent wave patterns in your heart rhythm— which helps restore balance and calm in your mental and emotional nature while activating the affirming power of your heart.)*

(3) During the heart-focused breathing, imagine with each breath that you are drawing in a feeling of *inner-ease* and infusing your mental and emotional nature with balance and self-care from your heart. *(It's scientifically proven that radiating love and self-care through your system activates beneficial hormones and boosts your immunity. Practicing will increase your awareness of when the stressful emotion has calmed into a state of ease. The mind and emotions operate on a vibrational level. Slowing down the stressful vibration helps re-establish the cooperation and balance between heart, mind and emotions. (Like an old electric fan that rattles until you turn it to a slower speed, which often quiets and restores the unbalanced vibration.)*

(4) When the stressful feelings have calmed, affirm with a heartfelt commitment that you want to anchor and maintain the *state of ease* as you re-engage in your projects, challenges or daily interactions.

Inner Ease is a registered trademark of Doc Childre



STRESS RELIEF TECHNIQUES For Adults

Techniques to Help Prevent Stress from Becoming Chronic

These strategies are most helpful when practiced daily to keep the body/mind/emotions in a state of equilibrium so that when stressors arise, you are able to cope more easily, quickly and effectively and therefore the stressor has a lessened negative effect on your wellbeing.

Ease Tension: Progressive Muscle Tension and Relaxation

Sit or lie down. Begin at the feet and ankles. First tense the feet and ankles to 100% of your capacity; then after a few breaths release the tension to 50%; again, after a few breaths reduce the tension to 25%. Then take a deep full breath and exhale all remaining tension from the feet and ankles. Repeat with the:

Legs

Buttocks and hips

Lower belly and back (pulling the abs in and pressing the low back into the chair or floor)

Front and back of the ribcage

Shoulders and arms

Facial features and neck (bring chin to chest and scrunch all facial features in towards the nose and tighten the jaw)

Note: try to keep the parts of the body you have tensed and released in a relaxed state as you move up the body.

Neutralize Unwanted Emotions: The Notice and Ease™ Tool

Step 1: Notice and admit what you are feeling.

To gain more insight about your emotions, you will need to become more aware of what you are feeling. Noticing and admitting what you are feeling requires slowing down and taking stock. Periodically, throughout the day simply pause and notice how you feel. It takes only a few seconds to ask, "What am I feeling right now?" Don't judge whatever you are feeling. Instead, observe what's flowing through your emotions. You'll discover new things about your emotional patterns and what triggers less desirable emotions in you.

Step 2: Try to name the feeling.

Simply by naming the feeling to yourself, whatever it is - worry, anxiety, frustration, anger, sadness, hurt, resistance or even a vague disturbance - will help you admit what you are feeling. Being honest about naming what we are feeling helps regulate our emotional energy, slowing down the emotional energy running through our system and giving us more power. We can then redirect emotional energy to work for us instead of having it leave us feeling drained throughout the day.

Step 3: Tell yourself to e-a-s-e ...



STRESS RELIEF TECHNIQUES For Adults

As you gently focus in your heart, relax as you breathe and e-a-s-e the stress out. As you tell yourself to ease in your heart, relax and ease the stressful

emotion out, feel as if the unwanted emotion is leaving your system. Don't force it out; ease it out. Befriend the reaction by holding it in your heart, then let the feeling ease out of your system. If you try to fight your feelings or push them away, they will gain energy. Befriending your feelings will help you clear. Keep using the Notice and Ease tool for one minute or longer, until you feel something lighten up, even if you don't get an immediate, complete release.

Notice and Ease is a registered trademark of the Institute of Heartmath.

Learn To Relax: The Relaxation Response

The following is the technique from Dr. Herbert Benson's book, *The Relaxation Response*.

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Deeply relax all your muscles, beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face. Keep them relaxed.
4. Breathe through your nose. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say the word, "one"*, silently to yourself. Breathe easily and naturally.
5. Continue for 10 to 20 minutes. You may open your eyes to check the time, but do not use an alarm.
6. Sit quietly for a few minutes before standing.

* or any soothing word or short phrase that is consistent with your beliefs but will not spark any emotional response.

De-Stress and Balance Emotions: The Quick Coherence® Technique

Step 1: Heart Focus.

Focus your attention on the area around your heart, the area in the center of your chest.

Step 2: Heart Breathing.

Breathe deeply but normally and feel as if your breath is coming in and going out through your heart area. Breathe slowly and casually, a little deeper than normal. Continue breathing with ease until you find a natural inner rhythm.

Step 3: Heart Feeling.

As you maintain your heart focus and heart breathing, activate a positive feeling. Recall a positive feeling, a time when you felt good inside, and try to re-experience the feeling. One of the easiest ways to generate a positive, heart-based feeling is to remember a special place you've been to or the love you feel for a close friend or family member or treasured pet. This is the most important step.

Quick Coherence is a registered trademark of Doc Childre