

Stress Relief: Activities

Walking

Taking a walk is a great way to fight stress. Walking offers a chance to take a break from a stressful situation. It can also give you a few minutes to pause and think things through. Even a short walk can help you feel better. Walks in nature, such as in a park or forest, can be especially refreshing. That's because walking is a positive action that you control.



When you're feeling stressed, some simple exercises can provide relief right away. These exercises are not the kind you need sweatpants for. You can do them almost anytime and anywhere. They will help you feel more relaxed.

Stretching

Muscle tension is a common response to stress. Stretching is a simple way to loosen up. Try these stretches:

- **Neck stretch.** Sit up straight and tuck in your chin. Place your left hand on the right side of your head. Gently pull your head to the left and hold for 10 seconds. A sense of muscle stretching is normal. Stop if you feel any pain. Switch sides and repeat the exercise.
- **Shoulder and arm stretch.** Put your hands together and lock your fingers. Then raise your hands above your head, palms upward. Hold for 15 seconds and relax. Repeat 3 times.

Deep breathing

Deep breathing is a simple method for relieving tension. Use 3 deep breaths each time you do this exercise.

1. **Inhale.** Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose. Take in as much air as possible. Hold for 3 seconds.
2. **Exhale.** Breathe out slowly through your mouth. Try pursing your lips as if you were going to whistle. This helps control how fast you exhale.

