

Exercises for Relieving Stress

Exercises for relieving stress may be in the form of physical, mental, or spiritual exercise - or a combination of all three, what is good for the body is good for the mind and vice versa.

Physical exercise is one of the most effective ways of relieving stress. Exercising the body regularly is very effective in managing stress, on its own or as a part of a stress management plan. Getting into better shape improves your mental health as well as your physical health.

By expelling your excess negative emotions and adrenaline through physical activity, you can enter a more relaxed, calm state of being from which you will be able to deal with the issues and conflicts that are causing your anxiety. Exercise is one of the most important coping mechanisms to combat anxiety and stress.

To be effective, you should exercise for twenty minutes at least three times a week. Before starting any exercise, check with your doctor to make sure that it is appropriate for you. Choose an activity that you enjoy and that you can easily fit into your schedule on a regular basis.

Sample of Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise

You can do this sitting on your office chair!!!

- Hands - Clench fists
tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Right forearms and hands - Extend arm, elbow locked, and bend hand back at the wrist
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Upper right arm - Bend arms at elbows and flex biceps
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Forehead - wrinkle forehead into frown, tense, release, rest, and/or raise eyebrows
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Eyes - close eyes tightly, hold and release
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Mouth - press lips tightly together
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Jaw - open mouth wide and stick out tongue
tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Buttocks - tense
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.



- Abdomen
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Chest
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Back - arch back
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Neck and shoulders
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Thighs
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Lower legs and feet - Point toes toward shin
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.
- Feet - Point toes and curl them under
Tense for 5 sec., release, rest for 10 sec.

You may repeat relaxing and tensing muscle groups that you have already done to relax them further.

Tips for Stress Relief

- If you feel tense, make sure you consciously breathe in and out slowly and steadily to combat the shallow breathing common when anxious.
- Maintain good posture. You spend most of your day sitting or standing. If your spine isn't in proper alignment, you will strain your back and neck. If you slouch while sitting you will compress your insides, including your diaphragm, and will breathe shallowly.
- To loosen up the neck, where many people carry their stress - Stand or sit up straight with the bottom of your spine turned under. (Do not arch your back) Let your head fall forward, keeping the neck and shoulders relaxed. Slowly swing your head to one side, then let it drop and swing to the other side.
- While doing stationary exercises such as riding a stationary bike or an elliptical trainer, watching TV can make exercise more fun.
- For non-stationary exercises such as walking, listening to music or listening to audio books may help pass the time.