

One-minute stress busters

Take a minute or two for *yourself* and relax with these simple stress busters. Your colleagues & family will be thankful.

Green tea break - Green tea contains some caffeine, but it also has antioxidants that can help lower stress hormones.

Shrug your shoulders - Stand comfortably and lift both shoulders up to your ears as you breathe in through your nose. Pause; exhale through your mouth, drop your shoulders down vigorously, to shake off tension. Repeat five times.

Breathe in a square - Sit or stand comfortably. Breathe in slowly through your nose to the count of four. Hold for the same count. Then breathe out through pursed lips for a count of four. Repeat for one minute.

Listen to relaxing music - Music can calm and relax you. Listen to music you find soothing. There is research that shows classical music has a great calming effect. Try Mozart, Vivaldi, or Baroque for relaxation.

Express your stress - Write about your stress is helpful. If you don't get it out, you'll add anger & bad mood to your stress.

Stretch your neck - Stand with your knees relaxed and feet shoulder-width apart. Slowly rotate your head: lower your right ear toward your right shoulder, bring your chin toward your chest, then your left ear toward your left shoulder. Roll your head around to the back, but, protect your spine & don't let it fall too far backward. Do this for 30 seconds. Then change direction and roll your head for another 30 seconds.

Visualize change - Sit comfortably, close your eyes and visualize dealing with an anticipated stressful situation calmly.

Relax your back - Lie on your back, your knees bent and touching, feet flat and hip-width apart, and arms alongside your body with palms up. Close your eyes and breathe in and out through your nose, slowly and deeply (allowing your belly to rise and fall), for one minute.

Exercise - stimulates the production of dopamine and serotonin, brain chemicals that lift your spirits.

Get creative - a fun way to reduce stress. Take 10 minutes to draw a picture of something that makes you feel good.

Forgiveness - Did you know research shows that hostility, impatience and holding grudges can damage your heart health? For a healthier heart, find joy through forgiveness, friends and optimism.

Train with weights - Harvard Medical School has shown progressive resistance training can be effective in reducing depression. Working out with weights releases endorphins, which are hormones that improve your sense of well-being.

Think and speak positive - "The thoughts we think and the words we speak create our experiences." Louise Hay

Laugh - Look for opportunities to laugh in positive situations. Keep a joke book on hand or print out a few jokes www.joke-of-the-day.com and www.ajokeaday.com



"Recognize your potential and surpass your dreams"