

Stress: Is there something I can do?

Slow Down

- Take time to relax or play a game
- Do something you enjoy like listening to music, or playing an instrument
- Be a kid for a few minutes
- Don't overschedule yourself

Get Plenty of Rest

Teenagers need lots of sleep. Not getting enough sleep can give you bad skin, make you clumsy and emotional, and make it hard to concentrate. Keeping your sleep on a schedule helps, too. Go to sleep and get up at the same time every day.

Eat Well

Eating well means eating a variety of foods, in moderation, that are high in vitamins and minerals, and provide a balance across the food groups. The basic rules are: *Eat breakfast. Do not skip meals. Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Get enough iron and calcium (especially important for girls). Do not eat too much junk food.*

Exercise

Choose activities you'll enjoy. The type of activity that will relieve your stress best depends on your personality and lifestyle. If you usually do quiet activities, vigorous exercise may be best. If you are active, calming exercise may be better. Remember, one of the stress reducing benefits of exercise is that it's fun. Choose an activity you'll enjoy

Hug someone you love

Studies have shown that hugging a loved one, a parent or close friend, for at least 20 seconds will reduce the feeling of stress.

Discuss Your Problems

Don't feel alone with your problem chances are good that other people feel the same way, too. Ask for help. If you feel like your stress is just too much, talk with your parents, siblings, a friend, or a counselor.

Activities for releasing stress

Deep Breathing Exercise

1. Stand straight up with feet shoulder-width apart
2. Arms and hands are relaxed downward
3. Body is relaxed
4. Eyes closed
5. Focus on lower abdomen (belly) and imagine a small balloon in that space
6. Breathe in slowly and deeply through nostrils, imagining the balloon inflating (*getting bigger/larger/growing*)
7. Slowly exhale through the mouth, imagining the balloon gently deflating (*getting smaller, shrinking*); blow out of the mouth as if blowing out a candle
8. **Tip:** Place a hand over the lower abdomen to feel it go up and down, and make sure you're not breathing with the chest
9. Repeat at least 10 times



Progressive Relaxation

Deep muscle relaxation



1. Raise your eyebrows and wrinkle your forehead. Try to touch your hairline with your eyebrows. Hold for 5 seconds... and relax.

2. Make a frown. Hold for 5 seconds... and relax.

3. Close your eyes as tightly as you can. Draw the corners of your mouth back with your lips closed. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.

4. Open your eyes and your mouth as wide as you can. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the warmth and calmness in your face.

5. Stretch your arms out in front of you. Close your fist tightly. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the warmth and calmness in your hands.

6. Stretch your arms out to the side. Pretend you are pushing against an invisible wall with your hands. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.

7. Bend your elbows and make a muscle in your upper arm. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the tension leave your arms.

8. Lift your shoulders. Try to make your shoulders touch your ears. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.

9. Arch your back away from the back of your chair. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Then round your back. Try to push it against the back of your chair. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the tension leaving your back.

10. Tighten your stomach muscles. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.

11. Tighten your hip and buttock muscles. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.

12. Tighten your thigh muscles by pressing your legs together as close as you can. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.

13. Bend your ankles toward your body as far as you can. Hold for 5 seconds ... and relax.

14. Curl your toes under as far as you can. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the tension leave your legs.

15. Tighten all the muscles in your whole body. Hold for ten seconds...and relax. Let your entire body be heavy and calm. Sit quietly (or lie quietly).



*Enjoy this feeling of relaxation
for a couple of minutes*



Simple Meditation

Meditate – to think calm thoughts in order to relax or have a spiritual activity.

Meditation - A state that is experienced when the mind is free of all thoughts; when the mind is quiet; Focusing the mind on a single object (such as one's breath or a mantra/chant) An "opening up" to the divine or to a "higher power" Focused thought on a topic (such as thinking about kindness)



1. Begin by sitting comfortably, balanced, and relaxed (if seated in a chair, feet on the ground). Breathe easy and from the abdomen/"belly breathing" (not chest breathing).
2. Practice a few deep breaths with the group.
3. Rotate the head in easy, slow circles; change directions and rotate in slow, easy circles.
4. Lookup; tilt your head way back. Look down; put your chin on your chest.
5. Drop your arms and hands to the side and shake them gently and easily.
6. Raise your feet off the floor and gently and easily shake the knees.
7. Straighten your spine while meditating.
8. Now, sit straight up, relaxed, and balanced.
9. **"Close your eyes"** (two minutes elapse)
10. **"Open your eyes"**
11. Repeat exercise: **"Close your eyes"**...two minutes elapse...
12. **"Open your eyes"**