

STRESS LESS



YOUR CHALLENGE: Take time to relax and practice one of the three stressors.” Report the completion of your goal at www.dmba.com with a simple “yes” or “no.”

“Daily De-

MANAGING STRESS

When you’re smack-dab in the middle of a stressful moment or situation, the thing you want most is relief. That’s when you need to let go, slow down, and quiet your overwhelmed emotions.

TAKE FIVE. COUNT TO FIVE. RELEASE TENSIONS AND REFOCUS.

Counting to five. Sure, it may sound simple. But stopping and counting to five—once, or several times in a row if you need to—could be the time-out you need before you react to stress.

Stress doesn’t always hit us all at once. Big obvious stressors like job loss, divorce, or death of a loved one can weigh us down. But they don’t happen every day.

More often, stress creeps in and pings us a little at a time with everyday irritants like traffic jams,



car trouble, computer crashes, or tardiness for an appointment. It's important to learn how to cope. Using these simple de-stressors can help.

'DAILY DE-STRESSORS'

One-minute meditation: Refocus and reenergize!

- Place your hand just below your belly button.
- Feel the rise and fall of your stomach as you breathe.
- Inhale for a count of five; pause for a count of three.
- Exhale for a count of five; pause for a count of three.
- Continue this deep breathing and pausing exercise for one minute.

Two-minute time-out: Reboot your system!

- Slowly count backward from 10 to zero.
- Say "10" to yourself. Take one full breath in. Then let that full breath out.
- Say "nine" to yourself. Take one full breath in. Then let it out.
- Continue until you get to zero.
- Go at your own pace.
- Repeat if necessary.

Three-minute tension buster: Release and let go!

- Sit comfortably in a chair.
- Relax the muscles of your face.
- Release the tension in your forehead, eyes, cheeks, and mouth.
- Let your jaw release and open slightly.
- Relax your shoulders by letting them drop.
- Rest your arms by your sides.
- Loosen your hands; let your fingers relax as the tension releases.
- Keep your ankles and feet uncrossed and parallel.
- Feel your thigh and calf muscles get heavier.
- Feel the tension leave through your feet and toes.
- Breathe in for a count of five. Exhale for a count of five.
- Relax your body even more each time you breathe out.

If you don't "de-stress," irritants can chisel away at your body, emotions, and behaviors, which can make you seriously sick and rob you of joy. Stress will never go away completely. Managing it can take time and practice. Try these other healthy ways to cope with the smaller issues so you can better deal with the bigger ones whenever they rear their ugly, bothersome heads:

- Breathe deeply
- Laugh
- Exercise



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- Take a warm bath
- Say “no” when you have to
- Socialize with friends
- Get a massage
- Listen to music
- Volunteer
- Play
- Find relaxation podcasts online
- Light a scented candle

MAKING TIME TO RELAX

Don't wait for your vacation to relax. The goal is to find ways to control tension or redirect the stress energy you experience regularly. Learn to recognize your stress signals and incorporate whatever relaxation technique works for you.

When you relax regularly, you will improve your mental and physical health as well as protect your immune system against stress.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

- American Heart Association <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living>
- WebMD <https://www.webmd.com/living-healthy>
- CDC Healthy Living <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyliving/index.html>

SOURCES:

- St. John Providence Health System www.stjohnprovidence.org
- Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.org

Note: If you can't complete this challenge because of a medical condition, let us know and we'll come up with an alternative for you.



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