

# Healthy Ways to De-Stress

- **Try Progressive Relaxation.** All the way from fingers to toes—tense and then release each muscle group in the body.
- **Try Yoga.**
- **Meditate.**
- **Breathe Deep.** Taking a deep breath has been shown to lower cortisol levels, which can help reduce stress and anxiety.
- **Try Aromatherapy.** Certain aromas (like lavender) have been shown to reduce stress levels.
- **Listen to Music.** Research points to multiple ways in which music can help relieve stress.
- **Laugh It Off.** Laughter can reduce the physical effects of stress (like fatigue) on the body.
- **Drink Tea.** One study found that drinking black tea leads to lower post-stress cortisol levels and greater feelings of relaxation.
- **Exercise.** That post-exercise endorphin rush is one way to sharply cut stress.
- **Try Guided Visualization.** Visualizing a calm or peaceful scene may help reduce stress and ease anxiety.
- **Chew Gum.** Studies suggest the act of chewing gum can reduce cortisol levels, helping to alleviate stress.
- **Get a Massage.** Studies suggest massage may be beneficial for fighting stress. It may also help improve body image.
- **Try Self-hypnosis.** Research suggests hypnosis can help reduce anxiety. Plus, it's a great self-mediated technique for stress-relief.
- **Talk About Sex, Baby.** Studies have shown sex can actually decrease the physical symptoms of stress, like lowering blood pressure. It burns calories too!
- **Take a nap.** Napping has been shown to reduce cortisol levels.
- **Hug it out.** Hugging may actually reduce blood pressure and stress levels in adults.
- **Hang with your pet.**
- **Do an art project.**
- **Write it out.** Keeping a journal may be one way to effectively relieve stress-related symptoms due to its meditative and reflective effects.
- **Take a walk.** Try not to rush, and take whatever pace feels most natural.

## Mindfulness Meditation Techniques

Mindfulness simply means to be aware of what is happening in the present moment...

1. Adjust your position so that it is symmetrical, upright, and open, and a little uncomfortable (if you're too comfy you could fall asleep).
2. Close your eyes and gently focus your attention on the space in front of them, between your eyebrows.
3. Concentrate on and listen to your breathing. Notice the rise and fall of the abdomen on each inhalation and exhalation.
4. Open your awareness to include the sounds around you – outside and inside the room.
5. You'll find your mind will tend to wander. That's OK. When it does, just bring your attention back to your breathing and the sounds you hear.
6. Try to sit and keep your mind calm for as long as you can. Start with 20 minutes a day and work yourself up. The more you practice, the longer you will be able to hold this mental focus.