

Life Skills

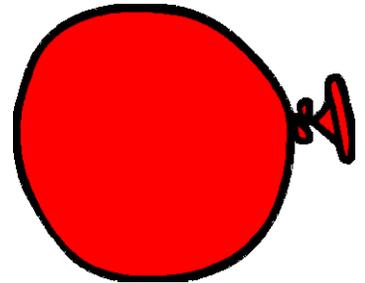
Relaxation Through Breathing

Purpose

- ♥ Relaxation and stress management are critical components of heart disease risk reduction.
- ♥ You have a remarkable body – a simple breathing exercise can balance your nervous system and help you relax.

Belly Breathing

- ♥ Imagine that your belly is a big balloon and you are slowly filling it with air.
- ♥ Place your hands on your belly while you slowly breathe in and out.
- ♥ Watch your hands as they rise as you breathe in and fall as you breathe out.
- ♥ Keep your attention on your belly while you continue to breathe slowly and deeply.
- ♥ Stress Management is the relaxed and peaceful feeling you get from *Belly Breathing*.



Practice

Set aside at least 10 minutes every day to practice *Belly Breathing*.

Tips

- ♥ Whenever you feel under stress practice *Belly Breathing*
- ♥ You can practice anywhere and at different times:
 - Watching TV
 - Taking a bath
 - Standing in line at the grocery store
 - Stuck in traffic
 - While cooking
 - Even during times of stress
 - While you are walking
 - When you want to relax

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Self-Care/Stress: Ten Timely Tips

Article by L. John Mason, Ph.D.

Tip #1 Take 40 Deep Slow Diaphragmatic Breaths Each Day (Spread evenly throughout your day not all at once at the end of the day or you might hyperventilate.) You can benefit from associating the deep breaths with some common work occurrence such as the telephone ringing or clock watching.

Tip #2 Use Regular Relaxation Periods for Work Breaks. Try fifteen to twenty minute periods of (hopefully) undisturbed time away from phone and/or family. Commit to using this for four to six weeks to begin to see the benefits.

Tip #3 Get Regular Exercise. Aerobic activities such as walking, jogging, swimming, biking, etc. for 20 minutes 3 times per week is minimum. Recommended is 30 minutes or more, 4-6 times per week. But do not hurt yourself!

Tip #4 Eat Sensibly. Avoid Caffeine. Do Not Cope With Stress by Using Alcohol or Drugs. If you are stressed out, caffeine is like throwing gasoline on a fire to put it out!

Tip #5 Get Focused on New Directions and Regular Planning. Give yourself positive options if you feel trapped. Plan for growth in all aspects of your life not just work and finance (family/relationships, spiritual interests, creativity, vacations, hobbies, etc.)

Tip #6 Use and Develop Your Humor! Positive Attitudes Really Help! Difficulties, when viewed as opportunities for growth and proving your abilities, are less harmful. But do not bury your anger, fear or sadness.

Tip #7 Protect Yourself From Negative Co-Workers and Relationships! Do not get caught up in other people negative thinking or let them rip off your peace of mind and positive energy. Take good care of yourself!!

Tip #8 Get Back In Control! If you can not control all the people and situations that happen around you.... at least you can control the way you respond!

Tip #9 Give Sincere Compliments Freely and Smile! Be positive and let it shine on all that surround you. It will come back many times more.

Tip #10 Learn to Really Listen! It is the best communication technique that you can develop!

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