

HEALTHY ON THE JOB

Topic: Stress Management Relaxation Techniques



Are you looking for some easy and useful tips to release stress? When people work in the office or at home all day, they always feel a little breathless at some point. The tiredness comes from your stress directly, and it can be eliminated by proper stress management!

In the USA, more than 1/3 of US workers report relatively high levels of stress. The research finds out that individual-oriented techniques are often used to reduce workers' stress, such as progressive muscle relaxation, exercise, and meditation. Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a deep relaxation technique, and it was used effectively to reduce anxiety and stress, and relieve insomnia. Generally, practitioners begin with the lower extremities and end with the upper body. You can try PMR seated or lying down with comfortable clothing on.

Here is how it works:

1. While inhaling, contract one muscle group (for example your upper thighs) for 5 seconds to 10 seconds, then exhale and suddenly release the tension in that muscle group.
2. Give yourself 10 seconds to 20 seconds to relax and then move on to the next muscle group (for example your buttocks).
3. While releasing the tension, try to focus on the changes you feel when the muscle group is relaxed. Imagery may be helpful in conjunction with the release of tension, such as imagining that stressful feelings are flowing out of your body as you relax each muscle group.
4. Gradually work your way up the body contracting and relaxing muscle groups.

MINDFULNESS SERIES

USEFUL RESOURCES



Rutgers Cooperative Extension

njaes.rutgers.edu



Get Moving - Get Healthy NJ

gmghnj.rutgers.edu



Get Moving - Get Healthy NJ Workforce

gmghnj.rutgers.edu/workforce



Family & Community Health Sciences Department

njaes.rutgers.edu/fchs



Easy Relaxing Exercises to Try.....

Progressive muscle relaxation is also a good tool to learn about your body and the signals it may be telling you. Another quiet relaxation way would be yoga and meditation. Take a 30 minutes break and do some yoga movements to release tension in muscles and comb through your thoughts when you work at home. Doing relaxed yoga practice and meditation with light music to allow you to take a break from your busy work day. However, sometimes, you need a quick stretch to flex your muscles while sitting at your desk. There are four easy exercises you can try:

Chair Squats: Stand upright with your feet a shoulder's width apart. Inhale as you start sitting, but let your bottom gently touch the chair without sitting down. Exhale as you push yourself back up to a standing position. Squeeze your buttocks as you do this movement for one minute.

2. Arm & Elbow Stretches: Sit up tall in your chair, then place your fingers on the back of the lower part of your head. Inhale and hold your elbows out wide, squeezing your shoulder blades together. Exhale as you bring your elbows together in front of your nose and feel the stretch in your upper back. Continue to breathe deeply as you do this exercise for at least 30 seconds.

3. Sit Up & Stretch: Sit up tall in your chair. Spread your arms out wide as you reach both arms up high. Clasp your hands together high above your head, then gently stretch from right to left keeping your torso straight for 30 seconds.

4. Water Bottle Overhead Press: Sit comfortably in your chair with your shoulders relaxed. Relax your arms at your sides while holding a full 12- or 16-ounce water bottle in each hand. Lift your hands to shoulder height, elbows bent and palms facing forward. Exhale as you push both arms up overhead, palms facing forward. Inhale as you lower your arms to the starting position. Do this exercise for 30 seconds.

****Disclaimer****

Always consult a qualified medical professional before changing, starting, or stopping any part of your healthcare plan, including nutrition, physical activity, or exercise. Be sure to follow all work-place safety rules, procedures and policies, and check with supervision before conducting any exercises or recommendations contained in this newsletter while at work. Rutgers Cooperative Extension does not assume any liability for injuries or health concerns arising from participation in activities mentioned or outlined in this newsletter.

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More Resources....

choosemyplate.gov

njaes.rutgers.edu/health

getmovinggethealthynj.rutgers.edu

Family & Community Health Sciences
Healthy Recipes

vimeo.com/getmovinggethealthynj/videos

Explore our healthy recipe videos!

EatingWell.com has lots of healthy recipes.

Mayo Clinic Healthy Recipes

mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/recipes

The Food Network's Healthy Dinners in 40 Minutes or Less

foodnetwork.com/healthy/packages/healthy-every-week/quick-and-simple/healthy-dinners-in-40-minutes-or-less

Healthy Recipes

Besides physical activity, a fresh and clean diet will also help us to lower our

stress. A balanced diet of colorful fresh fruits and vegetables helps people to avoid over-consuming of unnecessary food and additives. It also provides enough nutrients and flavors to awaken our senses and boost our body during the workday. In addition, fresh fruits and vegetables provide you soluble fibers that can regulate your bowel movements. Try one of these two fresh vegetable recipes as your light lunch:

1. Easy Veggie Recipe-Quinoa, Roasted Veggies & Herb Salad

Ingredients

1 cup Quinoa	2 cups fresh green beans, chopped
2 cups water	1 onion, chopped
½ teaspoon salt	¼ cup fresh chives, chopped
1 sweet red pepper, seeded and chopped	¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
1 small head broccoli, chopped	¼ cup fresh basil, chopped
2 tablespoons olive oil	Sprinkle of salt and pepper

Preparation Steps

1. Combine Quinoa, water and ½ teaspoon salt in covered saucepan. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 15 minutes, or until all water is absorbed. Set aside to cool.
2. Rinse green beans, red pepper, & broccoli, then chop into 1” pieces. Chop onion. Place the veggies on a baking sheet, toss with olive oil and a sprinkle of salt & pepper. Roast in hot oven 425 degrees for 15 minutes, or until the veggies are tender crisp. Set aside to cool.
3. Rinse, pat-dry, then chop: chives, parsley & basil. Then add cooled Quinoa, roasted veggies, toss together until well blended.
4. Serve this dish as a light main entrée or side dish!

<https://niaes.rutgers.edu/fchs/recipes/>



Healthy Recipe

2. Peachy Spring Salsa with Pita

Ingredients

- 3 fresh peaches (nectarines may also be used)
- 1 fresh lime
- 1 cup fresh, thinly sliced radishes
- ¼ cup red onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup cucumber, peeled & chopped
- 2 teaspoons cilantro, finely chopped
- 1 ½ teaspoons sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Preparation Steps

1. Rinse peaches under cool running water. Remove the skin, discard the stone, and chop peach into small pieces. Squeeze the juice from one lime then add to chopped peaches.
2. Add all remaining ingredients to the peaches. Toss lightly to coat. Cover & chill for at least one hour.
3. To make Pita Wedges:
4. Cut 3 pitas into 8 wedges each. Place pita wedges on a large baking sheet. Lightly coat the wedges with olive oil. Bake the wedges at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or, until wedges are lightly browned. Allow the wedges to cool completely.
5. Serve with Peachy Spring Salsa!!!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV4lp9EC2UU&t=24s>



Physical Activity Resources:

- 1. [Fitness and Wellness Videos \(7\):](#)
- 2. [Yoga and Meditation videos \(8\):](#)



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**FCHS... Promoting Healthy Families,
Schools and Communities**

“Stress is an ignorant
state. It believes that
everything is an
emergency. Nothing
is that important.”

—NATALIE GOLDBERG



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