

These techniques can help you feel less stressed because they bring your mind and body together in harmony.

## DEEP BREATHING

This technique focuses on breathing slowly and regularly, which creates the physiological conditions that allow the mind to let go of all other thoughts and just relax.

1. Sit back in your chair and slowly relax your body.
2. Begin by slowly inhaling through your nose. Fill the lower part of your chest first, then the middle and top parts of your chest and lungs. Do this slowly, over 8 to 10 seconds.
3. Hold your breath for a second or two.
4. Quietly and easily relax and let the air out.
5. Wait a few seconds, and then repeat this cycle. If you find yourself getting dizzy, you are overdoing it. Slow down.

Deep breathing is an excellent way to remove your stress and can be performed at work, on the subway, or anywhere you find yourself needing to focus or just take it easy on yourself.



## GUIDED IMAGERY

The goal of this exercise is to help you relax by imagining a place where you feel at peace. Your body will follow (i.e., your muscles should relax), creating mind-body harmony and relaxation.

1. Sit or lie back with your eyes closed.
2. Imagine a favorite, peaceful place, such as a favorite chair, a quiet park, or the beach. Any place that you find relaxing will do.
3. Imagine you are in that place. See and feel your surroundings. For example, if your place is the park, hear the sounds of birds chirping, smell the fresh-cut grass, and feel the warmth of the sun on your back and the breeze on your skin. Relax and enjoy it.

Return to this place any time you need to relax.

There are a number of websites and apps for guided imagery and mindfulness. One site to start with is <https://www.mindful.org/about-mindful/>.

**These techniques can help you feel less stressed because they bring your mind and body together in harmony.**

## PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

**This technique helps you to reduce tension in your body and mind together.**

1. Sit (or lie) quietly. Close your eyes.
2. Pay attention to your feet. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them by releasing the tension in your feet and letting them sink into the floor.
3. Repeat these steps—feel, sense, relax—as you move up your body, focusing on one part at a time. Continue with your toes, ankles, knees, upper legs, and thighs. (To promote sleep, feel the tension slipping from your body parts and sinking into the bed.)
4. Notice your buttocks. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them by releasing tension and letting them sink into your chair.
5. Focus on your abdomen and chest. Sense your breathing. Consciously will them to relax. Deepen your breathing slightly.
6. Pay attention to your hands. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them by releasing the tension in your hands and letting them sink into your chair.
7. Continue with your upper arms, shoulders, neck, and head.
8. Focus on your mouth and jaw. Consciously relax them. Pay particular attention to your jaw muscles and unclench them if you need to.
9. Pay attention to your eyes. Sense if there is tension in your eyes. Sense if you are forcibly closing your eyelids. Consciously relax your eyelids and feel the tension slide off the eyes.
10. Notice your face and cheeks. Consciously relax them and feel the tension slide off.
11. Mentally scan your body. If you find any place that is still tense, consciously relax that place.

Progressive relaxation is a very effective way to help you unwind at the end of a long day and helps many people fall into a restful sleep.



## SELF-MASSAGE

**This simple self-massage technique will help release tense muscles:**

- Place both hands on your shoulders and neck.
- Squeeze with your fingers and palms.
- Rub vigorously, keeping shoulders relaxed.
- Wrap one hand around the other forearm.
- Squeeze the muscles with thumb and fingers.
- Move up and down from your elbow to fingertips and back again.
- Repeat with other arm.

These techniques can help you feel less stressed because they bring your mind and body together in harmony.

## YOGA AT YOUR DESK

Yoga stretches keep you alert during the workday and help you to release stress.



### ARM STRETCH

1. Interlock your fingers and extend your arms outward, straight in front of your shoulders. Your palms should be facing outward.
  2. Slowly raise your hands overhead, stretching all the way from the waist. Work on straightening your elbows.
  3. Hold for 30 to 45 seconds. Relax and try again.
- 



### CHAIR TWIST

1. Sit on the edge of your chair, sideways, with your left side facing the chair back.
  2. Throughout the pose, keep your feet and knees together and even.
  3. Wrap your hands around the back of your chair.
  4. Inhale while straightening your spine.
  5. As you exhale, twist toward the back of the chair, twisting from the very bottom of your spine, pushing with your left hand, and pulling with your right hand.
  6. Repeat the inhalation/straighten and exhalation/twist series several times.
  7. Release and switch sides.
- 



### CHAIR LOWER BACK STRETCH

1. Sit in your chair and separate your legs so they are wider than hip-distance apart.
2. Bend forward at your hips and allow your entire body to relax. You can round your back. Drop your head and completely relax your neck.
3. If you are not completely comfortable, try putting a rolled blanket or towel at your hips, then lean over again.
4. Hold this pose as long as you like, allowing each exhalation to relax your body and mind a little more.
5. Sit up on an inhalation, pause for a few moments, and then try again.