



BREATHE

We all know how to breathe, but getting the most from each breath during a stressful time can relax your muscles, decrease your heart rate, and eventually lower your blood pressure. Try different techniques when you have the time (and space) to do so. As you become more comfortable with these exercises (or other exercises that help you relax), incorporate them into your everyday routines.

Breath Counting

- Sit up straight or lay down.
- Take normal, deep breaths.
- Feel your stomach rise and fall as you breathe.
- Each time you breathe out, count a breath.
- Count 10 breaths in a row. If you miss one, start over.
- When you get to 10, repeat.
- Focus on your breathing and block out all other thoughts.

Repeat as Necessary

Belly Breathing

- Find a comfortable place and sit or lie down.

- Place one hand over your belly button; place the other hand on top.
- Take a deep breath in (2-3 seconds) through your nose and feel the air travel down into your 'belly' making your abdomen and hands rise.
- Hold your breath for several seconds, keeping the air inside your 'belly'. (This is expanding your diaphragm and lungs.)
- Think to yourself that your body is calm and at peace.
- Slowly exhale through your mouth and feel your hands and abdomen go down.
- Repeat 4-5 times.
- As you become more comfortable, you can increase the length of time you breathe in and hold your breath. Repeating this exercise several times a day and during stressful situations can help you relax.
- *Note: If you ever feel dizzy during this exercise, stop! Try again with shorter and fewer breaths. If you continue to have difficulty, you may want to contact a doctor, nurse, or physical therapist.

Mountain State Centers for Independent Living (October 6, 2009). Retrieved on October 13, 2009, from <http://www.mistcil.org/skills/stress-deal-3.html>

CBT?

CBT or Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is based on the idea that **thoughts** cause our feelings and behaviors, **not** external things, i.e. not things, people, or situations outside of ourselves.

A = Activating event

B= Beliefs

C=Consequences

D=Dispute

E= Effective new belief or emotional consequence



Coping Strategies!

- * Positive Self-Talk
- * Simplify your life.
- * Be self-aware: plan time for yourself. After all, *“if you fail to plan, you plan to fail!”*
- * ASK for what you need, and
- * Delegate!
- * Avoid “can’t” when you really mean “won’t.”
- * Time manage.
- * Learn to say, “No!” You CAN say, “I’ll get back to you,” and buy yourself time to think.
- * You can also say, “No!” by saying YES to something else.
- * Develop and implement an “Attitude of Gratitude!”
- * Eat nutritiously. Sleep 8 hours a night!
- * Try something new.

Helpful Self-Statements

1. I know I can do this!
2. Keep breathing! IN through my nose and s-l-o-w-l-y OUT through my mouth.
3. One step at a time. CALM DOWN!
4. This is difficult. Each step I take is a step forward.



- * Look at your expectations. Are they reasonable?
- * Deal with problems as they appear.
- * Let GO!
- * Make time for fun!
- * Nurture and maintain supportive relationships.



AVOID!

Should; Ought; Must; Have to...

One-Liners

- * Acceptance is the key to serenity.
- * AAA = Awareness Acceptance Action (What is the issue? Where do I stand in relation to it? What can I do?)
- * How Important Is It? (Do I really need to go to every conflict I am invited to?)
- * MYOB = Mind Your Own Business (I have enough to focus on without getting involved in other people's stuff.)
- * Listen and Learn (I don't have to agree; just listen and come to an understanding.)
- * Is it kind? Is it important? Is it necessary? (Nine little words that help me think before speaking.)
- * Keep an Open Mind
- * Easy Does It (Slow down; take it easy; smell the coffee. Will it matter a month from now?)
- * Act as if... or Fake it till you make it.
- * Let It Go! (If it's not yours, let it go.)
- * Keep the Focus On Me (I have enough to do just to take care of myself. Model this and note the benefits to others.)
- * Live and Let Live. (Accepting others and accepting self removes stress and develops compassion.)
- * Stay in the Now: The Present is a gift I give myself. (Past is history; Future hasn't been written.)
- * KISS: Keep It Simple Sweetie
- * First Things First (Priorities help achieve results)
- * One Day at a Time (It's all we really have so make the most of it.)



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Taking Care of the Caretaker



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