

Live Well to  
Learn Well

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# Relaxation Techniques

Feeling stressed? Try these suggestions . . .

Controlled Breathing	Visualization
<p><b>Practice controlled breathing to release tension in your mind and body.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lie or sit down in a quiet, comfortable area</li> <li>Place your hand on your diaphragm</li> <li>Inhale slowly to the count of five; feel your stomach expand out as you breathe in</li> <li>Pause and hold your breath</li> <li>Exhale slowly to the count of five; feel your stomach fall as your breathe out</li> <li>Repeat for several minutes</li> </ul> <p><i>Tips:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>This is a great exercise for before sleep.</i></li> <li>✓ <i>It can be practiced anywhere; it is great for immediately reducing stress when faced with difficult situations.</i></li> <li>✓ <i>It may be helpful to repeat a calming phrase or mantra in your head as you breathe (e.g., “This too shall pass,” “I am relaxed”).</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Use your mind to journey to a calm and relaxing place.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find a comfortable place, free of distractions</li> <li>Close your eyes</li> <li>Pick a place that you find comforting, relaxing, and peaceful. This can be a place you have been before, or you can imagine a peaceful place in your mind. Your spot may be your childhood bedroom, your favorite area on a lake, a beautiful garden, a tropical island, or anywhere you imagine being peaceful and serene.</li> <li>Use all your senses! Imagine the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings of the area. What is the temperature? What sounds do you hear? What do you see? Are you alone or is there someone special there with you?</li> <li>Try to enjoy being in this peaceful place for at least 10 minutes.</li> </ul>
Progressive Muscle Relaxation	“Let’s Meditate” Mindfulness Meditation
<p><b>In this exercise, you practice tensing and relaxing different muscle areas. At the end, your whole body should feel more relaxed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start at your toes.</li> <li>Tense your toe and foot muscles. Hold 5 seconds.</li> <li>Release the tension; relax for 5 seconds.</li> <li>Move up to the next muscle group (calves, legs).</li> <li>Repeat the tense and relax sequence, holding each pose 5 seconds.</li> <li>Continue to move through all the muscle groups in your body (stomach, chest, arms, shoulders, neck).</li> </ul> <p><i>Tips:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Breathe normally as you tense and relax.</i></li> <li>✓ <i>If you experience pain, skip that muscle group.</i></li> <li>✓ <i>You can also start at your head and move down your body.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Be. Here. Now.</b></p> <p>Cultivating a practice of mindfulness is a smart investment in your career, your health, and your overall happiness. People who meditate seem to feel better, do better, and find that the practice sustains them in their personal and professional lives. “Let’s Meditate” is a weekly Guided Meditation Series that offers an opportunity to practice a relaxing and restorative technique supported by scientific research.</p> <p><i>What to know:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Sessions are offered M–F at sites across campus</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Everyone is welcome: sessions are open to all members of the Cornell community, including students, faculty, and staff of all ages, genders, sizes, shapes, and abilities</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Come as you are (dress comfortably)</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Participation is FREE (come to as many as you wish)</i></li> </ul> <p>More information: <a href="http://health.cornell.edu/meditate">health.cornell.edu/meditate</a></p>

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