



STRESS-LESS

PROGRAM WORKBOOK

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CORPORATE WELLNESS

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WEEK 6

Applying Practical Relaxation Skills

“Just as we have the ability to evoke the fight or flight response to stress, we can also induce its’ opposite, the relaxation response”
-Herbert Benson



Relaxation is a healthy skill that can be incorporated for stress relief. It can be very hard to allow our body and mind to relax, it takes mindful practice! This week we will learn 5 short relaxation techniques.

Relaxation has been proven to slow heart and breathing rates while activating the rest and digest nervous system. To combat the stress response in the body, we can learn to achieve its opposite: the relaxation response, a state of deep calm. The relaxation response puts the brakes on stress and brings your body and mind back into a state of balance.

Taking care of our body's well-being will make handling the stress response much easier. Assess your self-care habits below:

<u>SELF-CARE HABIT</u>	<u>HOW ARE YOU CURRENTLY DOING?</u>	<u>ARE THERE WAYS YOU CAN IMPROVE?</u>
SLEEP		
HYDRATION		
EXERCISE		
NUTRITION		
RECHARGE TIME		

Practice Visualization to Manage Stress

When you have unwanted thoughts

Stop sign technique: Imagine a big red stop sign on a street with a clear blue sky. Focus on the stop sign & repeat the word "stop."

When you are focused on the "What If's"

Favorable Outcome Visualization: Visualize a favorable resolution to a stressful situation or the best case scenario you can imagine.

When you are being hard on yourself

Compassion Mantra: Visualize giving yourself a hug and say or think a positive mantra like "I am worthy of love & understanding."

When you feel tense from stress

Visualize stress leaving the body. You can use water or light as the object that washes the stress away from your body.

When you're feeling overwhelmed

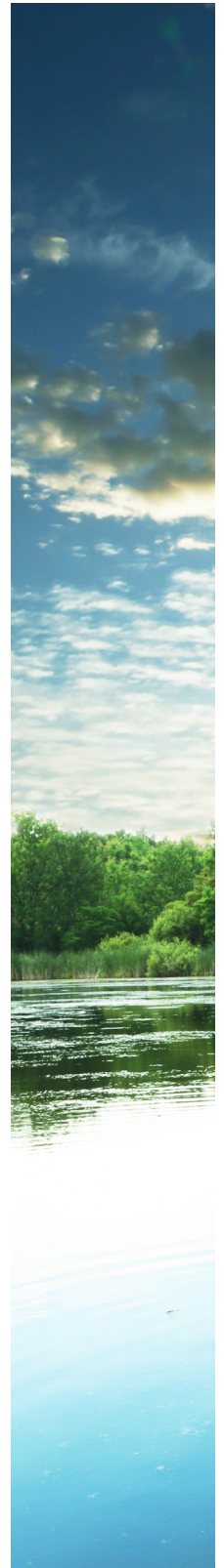
Imagine yourself in a beautiful, peaceful place using all of your senses to enjoy the scene for 2-5 minutes.

When anxious thoughts are keeping you awake

Imagine people chatting outside a double paned window. Close the window and quiet all the voices and thoughts behind it.

When you're stuck in a negative mindset

Recall a happy memory. When recalling the memory, try and visualize every detail as you remember it.



Utilizing Various Types of Relaxation

Relax! It's a Healthy Choice!

10 Steps to Mindful Meditation



Create time & space.

Choose a regular time each day for mindfulness meditation practice, ideally a quiet place free from distraction



Set a timer.

Start with just 5 minutes and ease your way up to 15-40 minutes.



Find a comfortable sitting position.

Sit cross-legged on the floor, on the grass, or in a chair your feet flat on the ground.



Check your posture.

Sit up straight, hands in a comfortable position. Keep neck long, chin tilted slightly downward, tongue resting on roof of mouth. Relax shoulders. Close eyes or gaze downward 5-10 feet in front of you.



Take deep breaths.

Deep breathing helps settle the body and establish your presence in the space



Direct attention to your breath.

Focus on a part of the body where the breath feels prominent: nostrils; back of throat; or diaphragm. Try not to switch focus.



Maintain attention to your breath.

As you inhale and exhale, focus on the breath. If attention wanders, return to the breath. Let go of thoughts, feelings or distractions.



Repeat steps 6-7.

For the duration of meditation session. The mind will wander. Simply acknowledge this and return to your breath.



Be kind to yourself.

Don't be upset if focus occasionally drifts or if you fall asleep. If very tired, meditate with eyes open and rearrange posture to more erect (but still relaxed) position.



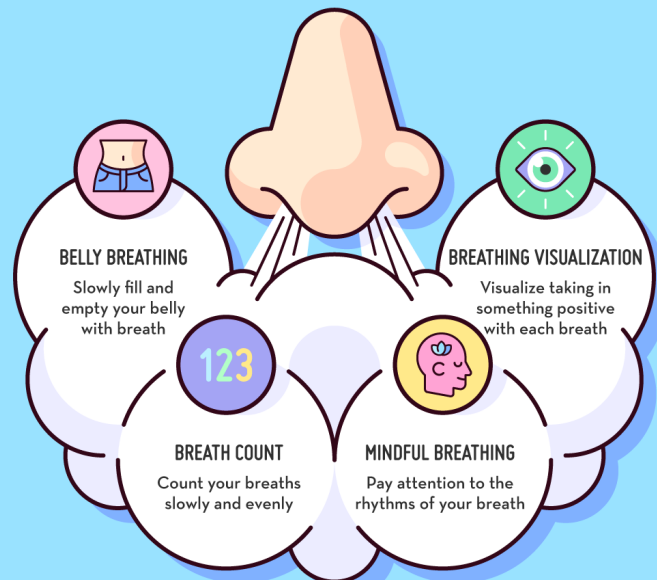
Prepare for a soft landing.

When the timer goes off, keep eyes closed until you're ready to open them. Be thankful. Acknowledge your practice with gratitude.

SOURCE: GARRISONINSTITUTE.ORG

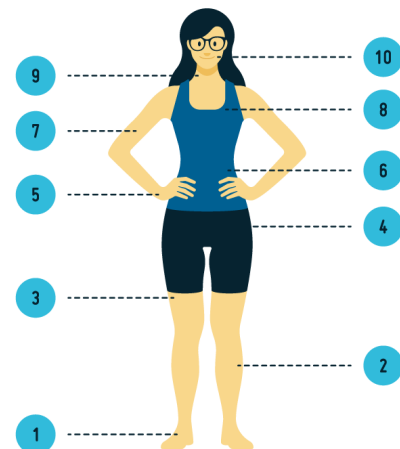
JUST TAKE A DEEP BREATH.

Start the week calm with four deep breathing techniques.



RELAX YOUR MUSCLES TO RELIEVE STRESS

Ease tension one muscle group at a time.



SOURCE: DESTRESSMONDAY.ORG

Central Focus: This week, during a stressful moment, pick an object and stare at it while breathing normal for 2-5 minutes.