HOW TO REDUCE STRESS IN SECONDS

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"THE HEADACHE GUY"
Disclaimer

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Treatment of illness or injury must be supervised by a physician or other licensed health professional.

Accordingly, either you, or the professional who examines and treats you, must take the responsibility for theses made of any of this material.
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How To Perform Simple Relaxation Techniques To Keep Tension Headaches Away

Breathing

The way you breathe greatly influences your state of relaxation - or lack of it.

And since being tense can contribute to tightness - especially in your neck and shoulders - it's worthwhile to practice breathing techniques that help you relax.

By simply focusing on your breathing, you move toward relaxation.

For starters, whenever you find yourself dwelling on upsetting thoughts, shift your awareness to your breath (unfortunately, our thoughts are often a source of anxiety and unhappiness).

What you're going to learn in the following exercise is conscious regulation of breath. It's simple, takes almost no time and you can do it virtually anywhere.

The best way to do this exercise is to be seated
with your back straight (although you can do it in any position).

Place the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue that's right behind your upper front teeth. Make sure you keep it there during the entire exercise (you'll be exhaling through your mouth around your tongue).

1. Exhale completely through your mouth (you should make a "whoosh" sound as you do this)

2. Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of four

3. Hold your breath to a mental count of seven

4. Exhale completely through your mouth, (making a whoosh sound) to a mental count of eight.

This entire cycle (1 through 4 above) is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the entire cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

Keep in mind that you always inhale quietly through your nose and exhale loudly through your mouth.
The tip of your tongue should stay in position (against the ridge of tissue just behind your upper front teeth) during all four breaths.

While the absolute time you spend on each phase is not important, the ratio for all three phases of the exercise is (remember the ratio is a mental count of four for the inhalation through your nose; a mental count of seven for holding your breath, and a mental count of eight for exhaling through your mouth).

This exercise acts as a tranquilizer for your nervous system. It becomes more powerful the more often you do it.

You can do it as often as you like, in fact the more often you do it the better your results will be.

With practice, you'll notice a sense of detachment and/or lightness after doing this exercise. Once you get in the habit of doing this technique, you'll find it defuses stress.

I suggest that you use it whenever anything upsetting happens, or whenever you are aware of inner tension.
**MUSIC AND SOUND**

Sound profoundly influences the nervous system. It can make us excitable or aroused, help us be calm and relaxed, or make us tense or anxious.

Obviously, you want to expose yourself to sound that promotes relaxation if you're working toward reducing stress in your life.

Classical music - especially baroque music written in the key of largo at four-quarter time - is excellent for promoting a calm mental state.

Baroque music, written in four-quarter time (60 beats a minute), causes your heart rate to drop, or start to drop, to mimic the 60 beats a minute you're listening to. As a result, your muscles begin to relax and you'll begin to calm down.

Another benefit of listening to baroque music is that it helps increase learning comprehension.

For example, if you listen to taped information and baroque music at the same time, you'll accelerate the learning process (provided you're in a
relaxed state - which baroque music induces).

Give it a try. Listen to a tape or CD of baroque music on your way home from work, or after dinner.

**EXERCISE**

Aerobic exercise is great for moderating the effect of your emotions. If you're upset about something, a brisk walk or bike ride, or half-hour lifting weights will often calm you down.

Exercise takes built-up energy and tension and allows you to release them constructively. If you don't exercise or haven't mastered more complex ways of overriding negative emotions, stress will remain bottled up inside you.

The result is a multitude of undesirable side effects - like tense neck, shoulder and upper back muscles.

You should exercise at least five days a week, for one-half hour each time.
MEDITATION

There are as many ways to meditate as there are stars in the sky. I'm only going to list one simple method of breath-counting and provide resources for other methods if you decide to integrate meditation as a regular practice in your life.

What is meditation? Essentially, it's the process of quieting the mind through directed concentration.

Meditators direct their concentration on an object: a phrase (mantra) repeated over and over; an image in the mind's eye; your breath.

There is documentation that the persistent practice of meditation lowers blood pressure, decreases heart rate and increases blood flow.

You should know that meditation is probably one of the hardest things you'll ever do. In fact, I recommend that you integrate the breathing exercise as a regular part of your life before you begin a meditation practice.

Having said that, becoming an everyday meditator is
probably the single best thing you can do to promote a calm state of mind.

To start, sit up with your back straight. While you can sit full- or half lotus, a chair will do fine (I don't recommend lying down, as you'll be prone to falling asleep).

Close your eyes and breath deeply for several breaths. Now, count your breaths...in, out...in, out...

Each in and out cycle is a full count of one. Count to four breaths, then repeat.

That's all there is to it!

Alas, you'll become aware of how tedious focusing on your breath is.

You'll notice your mind rebelling against the meditation, as it starts to distract you with all kinds of thoughts...what to have for dinner...what to wear for tomorrow's business meeting...how to handle a difficult child...

You'll also become aware of a variety of body
sensations, which will also demand attention, like an itchy foot, tight muscles or any number of other sensations.

The key is, whenever you become distracted from counting your breaths, your task is simply to go back to counting your breaths. Ideally, you want to detach yourself from your thoughts.

Please note that you are NOT trying to stop the thinking process.

That's impossible. You do, however, want to develop the ability to see the thoughts pass by, without attaching yourself to them.

This can take a long time to do consistently.

If you want to begin a meditation program, the best time to do it is first thing in the morning. If you can manage another session before dinner, you're progress will accelerate.

Start with 10 minutes per session and work your way up to 30.
Suggested reading:

"How to Meditate" by lawrence LeShan, Bantam Books

"How to Meditate, a Step-by-step guide to the Art and Science of Meditation" by John Novak, Crystal Clarity Publishing

"The Method of Zen" by Eugene Herrigel, Vintage Books
"Don't Just do Something, Sit There" by Sylvia Boorstein, Harper Collins

"Journey of Awakening, a Meditator's Guidebook" by Ram Dass, Bantam New Age Books

"Be Here Now," Ram Dass, Crown Publishing

MANTRA

This is the practice of repeating over and over certain syllables, words or phrases that help unify consciousness and override negative states of mind.
Like meditation, this practice is especially prominent in Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and other religions.

While you can use any phrase or set of sounds as mantra, it is best to use one that resonates with your spirit or spiritual belief system.

For example, if you're a Roman Catholic, the Roman Catholic prayer "Hail Mary, full of grace"

Another good mantra from the Christian tradition is "Not My But Thy Will, O Lord."

A common mantra for Tibetan Buddhists is "Om Mane Padre Hum," which roughly translated means "jewel in the lotus flower of the heart," which is a symbol of enlightenment.

Those from the Jewish tradition can use "Shema Yisroel, adonai eloheenu adonai ehod" as a mantra, which means "Heat, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."

A common Hindu mantra is to repeat "Ram" over and over (you actually say it in to syllables - Ra and ma,
with the "a" part of the "ma" sounded silently). Ram, by the way, was the avatar in the Sat Yuga, the purest period in human history (and quite ancient).

You'll find mantras far easier to do than meditation. The great thing about them is that mantra is a portable technique.

You need no training or equipment and you can do it anywhere, anytime (although you should be careful while doing mantra while driving or engaged in other activities that require your undivided attention).

This e-book was written by Doug Fogel, "The Headache Guy."

Doug's also coauthor of "How to Get Permanent Relief From Chronic Tension Headaches" a web site that teaches a holistic treatment for chronic tension headaches that's easy to learn and has helped thousands of people worldwide get permanent headache relief.

For more information about the program, or to order, go to http://www.tensionheadaches.com