



## How To Relax When Your Body Is STRESSED!

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*The human body* was designed intricately. Physical and emotional tension is our bodies' response to situations that are perceived as threatening. Stress is often experienced as a result. The effects of stress impact our decision making, processing of information to interactions with people. Stress is often a precursor to anxiety.

*Anxiety disorders* are one of the most common mental health problems in the U.S. with an estimated 40 million adults having an anxiety disorder according to the National Institute of Mental Health. When we become anxious we can enter a state of fight or flight. To calm our bodies from the potential stressors such as giving a presentation, meeting new people or worrying over finances we must develop relaxation techniques as means of practical tools to reduce

*Practice Deep Breathing* when breathing is rapid and shallow to regain well-being. Take a slow deep breath in through the nose as if smelling your favorite food coming out of the oven. Then exhale out of your mouth slowly as if blowing out birthday candles. Repeat until relaxed.

Research has linked exercise to exhausting pent up energy. The body often experiences agitation or adrenalin rushes when stressed therefore exercise, stretches or walking can be healthy ways to reduce stress and is also one tool linked to managing anxiety.

*Be mindful of the benefits of meditation* on the mind, body, and soul. Meditation can be in the form of prayer, listening to nature or sitting in solitude. Dr. Archibald Hart has even created a relaxation CD for guided relaxation.

*Progressive Muscle relaxation* is a technique to relax the tension in muscles. Tense each muscle group starting with your toes vigorously for 5 seconds and then suddenly release the tension and feel the muscle relax repeat 3 times then move up the body isolating one muscle group at a time.

*Self talk*, the inner dialogue one has with oneself can also decrease stress. Redirect negative or unhealthy thoughts by creating counter statements.

*Relaxation is critical to self-care.* As you practice these tools you can reduce not only physical tension but emotional and psychological stressors as well.

If you or a family member are interested in learning how to implement relaxation techniques or wish to learn more about the relationship stress has on anxiety contact one of our trained therapist to help.

our stress.



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