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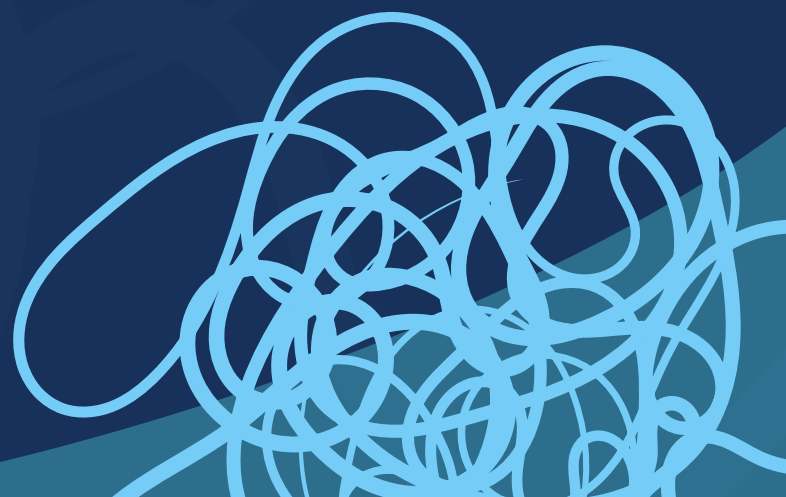
5 Tips to Reduce Stress

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Stress

is one of those things that just creeps up on us, it is part of our lives and depending on the circumstances, stress can impact our daily life. Sure, a bit of stress can be a good motivator to get things done, but, if left unchecked stress can lead to serious problems, both physically and mentally.

Here's what we know about stress: Stress is a natural response that arises when individuals perceive a threat or perceive the demands of the situation exceeds their ability to respond.



Tip 1 Breath Work

Slow, intentional breathing that activates the parasympathetic nervous system, responsible for aiding in relaxation after stress. Some examples of breath work are box breathing techniques like 4-4-6 breathing.

What to do:

- Inhale through your nose (count 1-2-3-4)
- Hold gently (count 1-2-3-4)
- Exhale slowly (count 1-2-3-4-5-6)
- Repeat for 3 cycles

Tip 2 Get Active

What it is:

Quick micro movements that reduce muscle tension, improve circulation and reset postural strain from sitting for long periods such as in vehicles or at a desk. Exercise and movement are natural stress buster that works wonders and can also increase alertness.

What to do:

- Stand and roll shoulders, forward and backwards 10 times
- Shake out your arms and legs for 10 seconds
- Do 7 squats or calf raises

Tip 3 Awareness

What it is:

Awareness involves becoming aware of the present moment, the here and now. This can be done with a sensory grounding technique. This can help shift your focus away from racing thoughts and bring awareness to the here and now.

What to do: Use the 5-4-3-2-1 Sensory Grounding Technique

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

Tip 4 Rapid Reframe

A rapid reframe is a technique used to quickly change an unhelpful thought into a more balanced and realistic one.

What to do:

- **Acknowledge Your Thought:** Pay attention and acknowledge anxiety provoking thoughts as they come up. Example “This is going to be a tough call, I don’t know if I can handle it.”
- **Rapid Reframe:** This call is going to be tough AND I am trained and capable of responding to this call.
- **Set the First Step:** “Take a deep breath AND my next action is to make contact.”

Rapid Reframe works in the moment and often must be revisited to support ongoing emotional regulation. Rapid reframe allows for individuals to acknowledge the “both and” allowing space to acknowledge our feelings and a reminder of what we know to be true.

Tip 5 Buddy Check

Checking in with your friends, family and co-workers strengthens relationships and shows them you care. It's a reminder they are not alone, and they are supported. For first responders buddy checks can be rewarding, and a reminder that the channel is open.

What to do:

- **Keep it Simple:** A quick text can be very meaningful. You don't need to write a novel or set up a meeting, just open the communication and let them know you are there.
- Be ready to listen if they do want to talk
- Offer support when needed.
- **Check in with yourself:** Make sure you have the capacity to check in with others and offer support.



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