



Understanding and Dealing with Stress

Quick Fixes to Physical Effects of Stress:

Breathe

We all know how to breathe, but getting the most from each breath during a stressful time can relax your muscles, decrease your heart rate, and eventually lower your blood pressure. Try these different techniques when you have the time (and space) to do so. As you become more comfortable with these exercises (or other exercises that help you relax), incorporate them into your everyday routines.

Breath Counting



- Sit up straight or lay down.
- Take normal, deep breaths.
- Feel your stomach rise and fall as you breathe.
- Each time you breathe out, count a breath.
- Count 10 breaths in a row. If you miss one, start over.
- When you get to 10, repeat.
- Focus on your breathing and block out all other thoughts.
- Repeat as many times as necessary.

Belly Breathing



- Find a comfortable place and sit or lie down.
- Place one hand over your belly button; place the other hand on top.
- Take a deep breath in (2-3 seconds) through your nose and feel the air travel down into your 'belly' making your abdomen and hands rise.
- Hold your breath for several seconds, keeping the air inside your 'belly'. □
(This is expanding your diaphragm and lungs.)
- Think to yourself that your body is calm and at peace.
- Slowly exhale through your mouth and feel your hands and abdomen go down.
- Repeat 4-5 times.
- As you become more comfortable, you can increase the length of time you breathe in and hold your breath. Repeating this exercise several times a day

***Note:** If you ever feel dizzy during this exercise, stop! Try again with shorter and fewer breaths. □
If you continue to have difficulty, you may want to contact a doctor, nurse, or physical therapist.