

Stress Busters

Use one or more of these activities the next time you want to relax or when you feel stressed out. Each activity only takes 10 to 30 minutes.

Exercise

Exercise for 30 minutes 3 to 5 times a week. You can walk, run, swim, dance, bike, play sports, or any other activity that gets your body moving. Exercise is a great way to release extra energy and keep fit.

Eat Healthy

Eat healthy foods such as whole grain breads, fruits, vegetables and drink lots of water. Be aware of how much you eat when stressed out. Try not to eat too little or too much. Eat breakfast every day. If you can, pack a healthy lunch and snack such as a sandwich made with wheat bread and a piece of fruit. Avoid junk food, soda, juices with added sugar, caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, and drugs.

Breathe Deeply

1. Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lay down.
2. Close your eyes or look at a spot on the wall.
3. Clear your mind of thoughts or focus on a word like “breathe” or “relax.”
4. Breathe in slowly through your nose until your chest is fully expanded. Breathe out slowly through your mouth until the air in your chest is pushed out. Try not to think about anything else except your breathing.
5. Repeat this deep breathing 10 to 20 times until you feel relaxed. (Don’t be surprised if you fall asleep).

Imagine Relaxation

1. Find a quiet place and get comfortable.
2. Close your eyes and imagine a place where you feel safe and relaxed. Think about how you feel and what you hear, see, and smell in this place. Or imagine the stress slowly flowing out of your body.
3. Stay with these feelings, thoughts, and sensations. Breathe quietly until you are ready to get up.

Express Yourself

Write in a journal. Or create art, play music, write stories or poetry, cook, laugh, or volunteer. Talk to someone you trust about how you feel.

Relax your muscles

1. Find a quiet place where you can lay down and get comfortable.
2. Close your eyes. Relax your entire body. Imagine that your muscles are limp.
3. Flex the muscles in your feet while you keep the rest of your body relaxed. Hold for five seconds and do not release. Then continue to flex other muscle groups one at a time: calves, thighs, stomach, chest, arms, hands, and face until your entire body is tense. Remember to keep parts of your body relaxed until it is time to flex them.
4. Hold your entire body tense for five seconds then release all the tension.
5. Relax, breath slowly and deeply, and imagine your body melting.
6. Get up slowly when you’re ready.

Get in TOUCH with YOUR Senses

Listen to music you enjoy. Take a shower or bath. Go outside for a walk or run. Focus on what you see, hear, and feel.

Resources:

- ♦ Emotional Health. Go Ask Alice!: www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/Cat4.html
- ♦ Mind Your Mind: www.mindyourmind.ca

Do you have any comments or questions about this handout? Please contact Adolescent Health Working Group by emailing feedback@ahwg.net or calling (415) 554-8429. Thank you.