



RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress affects almost everyone, and learning to manage it can reduce its impact and make your life easier. Most people find that giving up smoking is stressful. For one thing, it takes concentration to remember not to smoke. It can also be stressful learning to cope in new ways, even when it promises to help both your physical and emotional health. Think about how you can deal with stress and not smoke. Look at the resources around you, and plan on how you will handle stressors that will come your way.

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Exercise 1: Deep-breathing exercise

Note: If you have trouble balancing yourself with your eyes closed, this exercise can also be done sitting down.

- Stand up straight with your feet flat on the floor.
- Close your eyes and let your head bend forward. Let your head relax so that it naturally drops closer to your chest.
- Now, slowly inhale through your nose, drawing your breath deep into your abdomen. You should feel your stomach slowly expand as you inhale.
- Hold your breath and then slowly breathe out through your nose.

Repeat this exercise four times slowly. If you get dizzy, stop. When you feel ready to stop the exercise completely, open your eyes.

Exercise 2: Muscle relaxation exercise

Note: If you have a recent muscle strain, you may choose to omit this exercise. If you have trouble balancing yourself with your eyes closed, this exercise can also be done sitting or lying down.

- Stand up straight with your feet firmly planted flat on the floor and your eyes closed.
- Begin by tensing your feet as if you were grabbing the floor with your toes. Stay in this position and make the grip on the floor with your toes and feet tighter.
- Now, start to move the tension up through your ankles, your calves, and into your thighs, tightening your muscles as hard as you can.
- Continue to move the tension up through your stomach, chest, and shoulders.
- Focus on driving the tension down through your arms and your hands.
- Clench your fists.
- Now, move the tension up through your neck, face, mouth, eyes, and scalp.
- Hold this tension for five seconds, four, three, two, one, and relax. Take your time and relax your whole body.

When you feel fully relaxed open your eyes.