

## TAKING TIME OUT TO RELAX



Studies continue to show that taking time to relax is very important to keeping your stress under control. Relaxation will reduce your tension and help you to have a more positive, healthy outlook on life.

So how can you learn to relax? Below are a variety of relaxation techniques that you can use anytime, anywhere to distress.

### Quick Relaxation

Muscle tension is most commonly experienced in the back of the neck and shoulders. One easy way to get rid of such tension is to tighten the neck and shoulders, holding for 5-10 seconds before releasing. Repeat this exercise several times.

You can also release tightness in your shoulders by gently rotating them, first in one direction and then another. To release tension in your neck, slowly roll your head from side to side.

### Take a Walk

The next time you have built up a lot of physical tension or are about to enter a difficult situation, take a walk. Walk up and down stairs, down a hallway, around the block, or back and forth in your living room. A walk can give you a much needed "time out," releasing muscle tension and allowing more oxygen to enter your brain and body.

### "Time-Out" Relaxation

When you are caught up in a difficult situation and need to calm yourself down, try this: Push yourself away from your desk, or move away from whatever is causing you to be upset. Then, close your eyes, take a deep breath, exhale, and move back again. This brief "time out" can help release your physical and mental tension, providing a diversion that can help you return to the problem with a better mind set.

### The Relaxing Sigh

1. Sit or stand up straight.
2. Let out a deep sigh of relief as the air rushes out of your lungs.
3. Don't think about inhaling; just let the air come back in naturally.
4. Repeat this procedure 8-10 times whenever you feel the need for it, and experience the feeling of relaxation.

### Slow Breathing for Calming

Many people find slow breathing to be very calming and helpful before making a speech or when encountering a

negative situation. Concentrate on breathing slowly and calmly, thinking of your slow breathing as soothing your entire body.

Listening to music or taking a few moments to be alone have also been found to help many people relax. Stretching, closing your eyes and counting to 10, or simply finding something to laugh about may also prove beneficial.

The key is to find the relaxation exercises that you find most effective and then practice them regularly. The end result will be a happier, healthier you!

## WHAT IS SELF-ESTEEM AND HOW CAN YOU IMPROVE YOURS?

Self-esteem is the opinion you have of yourself. It is based on your attitude to the following:

- Your value as a person
- The job you do
- Your achievements
- How you think others see you
- Your purpose in life
- Your place in the world
- Your potential for success
- Your strengths and weaknesses
- Your social status and how you relate to others
- Your independence or ability to stand on your own feet

## HOW CAN YOU INCREASE YOUR SELF CONFIDENCE

As a child you may have had self-confidence without even questioning it. Chances are you were not overly concerned with how other people viewed you. As you began to grow up, you probably noticed a change in your self-esteem. You may have become more critical of the way you look, and feelings of inadequacy may have set in. Though these may be normal adolescent feelings, there are things that you can do to help yourself feel better.

- Make a list of the things that you do like about yourself. By making a list like this you can sometimes rediscover those great things about yourself that you might take for granted
- Take some time to do something nice for yourself, something that makes you happy
- Another simple way to boost confidence is to make a list of the things that you do well and to do one of these things on the list everyday.
- Exercise- Exercising greatly enhances your self esteem and mental outlook while reducing stress.
- Focus on your good points. If someone likes you they will see the good and not the bad. Make yourself worthy of love by liking yourself first.
- Straighten up, smile and look straight ahead - you'll look and feel more confident



