

Progressive muscle relaxation

A simple way to reduce stress and help to accurately identify tension in your body.

- Tighten the muscles in your feet. Hold for a count of 10. Relax and enjoy the sensation of tingling and heaviness.
- Tighten the muscles in your legs. Hold for a count of 10. Relax.
- Continue slowly up your body— abdomen, shoulders, neck, face—contracting and relaxing muscles. Do several reps of each.
- Breathe deeply and slowly and feel the relaxation and calmness develop.
- Try including soothing music to deepen relaxation.

Stretch



Stretching can help you feel more peaceful and relaxed. As you stretch, imagine the tension leaving as you gently push each muscle to its comfortable limit.

Close your eyes for better awareness of your body's responses.

IMAGERY

This is similar to daydreaming! Sit in a comfortable position, close your eyes and visualize a scene, object or place that is soothing and pleasing to you. Imagine every aspect of the scene, involving all your senses.

>>>>>Go to My Yoga Online at www.mcmaster.ca/health

RELAXATION STRATEGIES

Strategies

To

Effectively

Prevent

Stress

Mental Health Team

McMaster Univ. Student Centre B101

www.mcmaster.ca/health

S e l f - m a s s a g e

Massage is one of the easiest ways of attaining and maintaining muscle relaxation.

- Starting at the base of your neck, stroke your shoulders downwards.
- Make circular pressures with your fingertips, then knead your shoulder by squeezing and releasing the muscles.
- Loosely clench your fist and gently drum your shoulders.
- Finish by gently stroking over your shoulders, down your arms and off at the fingertips.

For more self-massage directions, visit www.livestrong.com/article/12454-do-selfmassage-/

A r o m a therapy

Consider trying incense, candles, body lotions/oils or herbal teas to include different aromas into your life...

- Cinnamon and vanilla help combat stress and promote relaxation
- Chamomile relaxes muscle tension
- Lavender helps ease mood swings, promotes sleep and reduces anxiety

d e e p b r e a t h i n g

Deep Breathing is the foundation of all relaxation.

It can be done any where, any time.

It can help you to relax and focus just before an exam or presentation.

Breathe in slowly through your nose. Focus on the air flowing in and your chest expanding. Hold for a count of five.....now **release slowly through your nose.** Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat.

What is your stress index?

Do I frequently...

	Yes	No
Neglect my diet?.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Try to do everything myself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blow up easily?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seek unrealistic goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fail to laugh when others laugh?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a “big deal” of everything?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look to others to get things done?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have difficulty making decisions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complain about being disorganized?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep everything inside? ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neglect exercise?.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have few supportive relationships?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get little rest?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Put things off until later?..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race through the day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fail to get relaxation into the day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TOTAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Score 1 for each “yes” and 0 for each “no” answer. **Total your score.**

- 1-3 There are few stressors in life, but ensure you’re not trying so hard that you shy away from challenges.
- 4-7 Life is in fairly good control, but work on the choices that may be causing needless stress.
- 8-11 You’re approaching the danger zone. Think carefully about choices made and take a break!
- 12 + **Emergency!** Stop, re-think how you are living, and pay attention to lifestyle choices.

