



Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

For Those Who Serve and Those Who SupportSM

Address Your Stress Resource Guide

Below are the instructions for the technique that we learned today:

Relaxation (Diaphragmatic) Breathing

1. Sit or lie down shoulders straight.
2. Breathe in through the nose (or pursed lips) – see your stomach rise (use a pillow).
3. Breathe out through you nose (or pursed lips)- see your stomach fall.
4. Pause a moment.
5. Continue 15 – 20 minutes.

Also, included below are online resources that link up to free examples of diaphragmatic breathing and additional stress management techniques such as, progressive muscle relaxation, keeping a thought record, relaxation response and guided imagery. Additionally, using YouTube, you can search for any of the techniques to find free and helpful videos related to stress and stress management.

University of Florida Extension Stress Management Workshop

<http://hillsboroughfcs.ifas.ufl.edu/Stress-Management.html>

Includes a seven-part course on stress management, which includes breathing exercises, visualization, and muscle relaxation workshops.



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Georgia Southern University

<http://students.georgiasouthern.edu/counseling/relax/index.htm>

Contains an online stress management workshop and online relaxation exercises, including diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and a thought record worksheet.

Mayo Clinic Meditation Video

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/meditation/MM00623>

This Mayo Clinic instructional video offers a guided meditation session to help you relax.

McMaster University Guided Relaxation CD

<http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/resources/relaxation15/relaxation.html>

The McMaster University Guided Relaxation CD includes free mp3 audio tracks for diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training and guided imagery.



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Podcasts



Podcasts are free and can be downloaded from the iTunes Store by using the search string “managing stress”, “relaxation”, “relaxation music”, “breathing” to find the titles listed below.

You can listen to podcasts through the iTunes stores or download for later viewing. You can also subscribe to podcasts to receive content from the same author.

- Managing Stress with Jones Bartlett – PRM and Autogenic Training Sessions
- Great Relaxation Music (www.greatrelaxationmusic.com)
- Relaxation Meditation with Lita Stone
- Wellness Workbook Guided Relaxation Exercises
- George Mason University – Guided Imagery, Mindfulness Meditation, PRM and Breathing Exercises.

Mobile Applications



Mobile applications are also available from the iTunes Store for iPhone and iPad. Similar apps are also available for other smartphone devices. Those listed below are free although data charges may apply.

- Nature Space Holographic Audio Theater (Visualization)
- National Center for Telehealth Technology Breathe 2 Relax (Guided Breathing)
- Pranayama (Guided Breathing)
- Silva Relaxation (Relaxation Exercises)



Stress Busting Strategies

- ✓ **Journal about your stress and worry** ... to help you identify the regular stressors in your life and the way you deal with them. Each time you feel stressed keep track of it in your journal. Make sure to track what caused the stress, how you felt physically and emotionally, how you responded, what you did to make yourself feel better.
- ✓ **Limit worry to a specific time of day** ... do your most unpleasant or most difficult task at the beginning of the day when you are fresh, thereby avoiding the stress of last minute preparation. Procrastination feeds stress!
- ✓ **Postpone worry when you are busy** ... Schedule your day, if possible, so that stressful scenarios don't overlap, reducing the number of stressors you must juggle at any one time. Stagger deadlines for large projects.
- ✓ **Tolerate and understand uncertainty** ... when deadlines approach and calamities at home arise, remember to take a *time out* and take a moment to address the situation. See if there really is something you can change or control in the situation.
- ✓ **Focus on the present, all else is illusion** ... Admitting to yourself that there's nothing you can do about a particular issue will go a long way in helping you adjust.
- ✓ **Do a physical activity** ... when we exercise, our bodies release endorphins that create a natural high. Exercise helps regulate sleep, decrease tension, decrease depression, and increase your immune system – from yoga to simple stretches during the day and at night.
- ✓ **Talk to a friend** ... is all we need to alleviate some tension. Having a conversation can add different perspectives, allow our frustration to vent, and give us a feeling of community instead of isolation. Remember you are not alone and many others face similar hardships.
- ✓ **Slow down your breathing** ... taking a moment to slow your breathing down can clear your mind and decrease your stress reaction.
- ✓ **Relax your body** ... begin in a comfortable position, either lying down or with your feet flat on the ground. Slowly tense the different parts of your body (starting with your toes) and then slowly relax them. Repeat this process of tensing and relaxing three times.
- ✓ **Adopt a healthy lifestyle** ... Eat a healthy diet - well-nourished bodies are better prepared to cope with stress, so be mindful of what you eat. Get enough sleep - adequate sleep fuels your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired will increase your stress because it may cause you to think irrationally. Drink water – helps to relieve stress.