


# 2-MINUTE STRESS RELIEVERS

## Mind/Body Techniques Help You Find Your Calm

**Stressed?** Thoughts can really carry us into some far off places, often leading to stress, worry, sadness, and inability to focus. These mind/body practices are proven strategies you can use to help direct your attention away from your thoughts and to the present moment. Each technique is designed to tap into the relaxation response of your body's nervous system. The relaxation response calms the mind, body and thoughts.

**Really, only 2 minutes?** Yes! All of these techniques can really be done in 2 minutes or less, busting the myth that you don't have time to care for your stress. Even better, many of these techniques can be done while you are at class, work, studying, hanging out with friends or alone. Notice how your mind and body respond to each technique and know that you can repeat or move onto another technique at any time.

**Perfection is not possible.** Wellness is about letting go of the expectation of perfection and instead embracing flexibility in how you care and relate to yourself. Depending on what is going on in your life, these techniques may work one day but not the next. That's okay! Each moment and each day is different. Therefore, having your "coping skills tool box" prepped with a variety of relief and wellness tools will help you take care of YOU!

<b>5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING</b>	<b>Directs your attention to EXTERNAL AWARENESS</b> Identify <b>5</b> things you <b>SEE</b> - no matter how big or small Identify <b>4</b> things you can <b>TOUCH</b> - what can you physically feel, whatever it may be Identify <b>3</b> things you can <b>HEAR</b> - audible external or body sounds, not internal thoughts/dialogue Identify <b>2</b> things you can <b>SMELL</b> - if no immediate smells, walk to find a scent, smell your hair, anything Identify <b>1</b> thing you can <b>TASTE</b> - notice the taste inside your mouth	
<b>SOUNDS OF NATURE</b>	<b>Directs your attention to the SOUNDS OF NATURE</b> Sit outside or inside, where you won't be interrupted. If you're inside, find nature sounds on Spotify or YouTube. When you're ready, close your eyes. Become aware of what you hear. Notice when a sound begins and ends. Notice subtle and more pronounced sounds. While you're hearing, know that you're hearing. What does it feel like to hear? Can I enjoy and appreciate the simplicity of being able to hear? When the mind wanders, the world of sounds will be waiting for you, relax and return to noticing sounds.	
<b>STRETCHING &amp; MOVEMENT</b>	<b>Directs your attention to the BODY</b> You don't need a full workout or the gym to experience the stress-relieving benefits of body movement. Get up and stretch. Reach your arms over your head and lengthen your muscles, like you were a pencil. With your arms still over your head, gently bend your waist to both sides. Release your arms and do any other stretches that feel good for your body. If you're not sure what to do, slowly walk around the room, building or the block. Notice how your body feels when you move and when you return to rest.	
<b>SQUARE BREATHING</b>	<b>Directs your attention to the BREATH</b> Reset your nervous system by slowing the pace of your inhales,exhales, and pausing in between. Use the diagram to help guide you. Repeat several times. If you need to reset and start over, that is okay. When done allow your breathing to return to it's natural state.	
<b>BODY SCAN</b>	<b>Directs your attention to SENSATIONS IN THE BODY</b> Find a quiet place where you can lay down and not be interrupted. Be guided through a <b>body scan meditation</b> at <a href="http://unh.me/Ghuf30phgBB">http://unh.me/Ghuf30phgBB</a> Be guided through a <b>progressive muscle meditation</b> at <a href="http://unh.me/kWnM30phgEX">http://unh.me/kWnM30phgEX</a> <i>These guided meditations are longer than 2 minutes but can be helpful in assisting you to develop your own body meditation that can be done in 2 minutes.</i>	

<p><b>MINDFUL PAUSE</b></p>	<p><b>Redirects your efforts from reacting to RESPONDING</b></p> <p>Taking an intentional pause can be helpful when facing a challenge or wanting to savor a moment of joy.</p> <p><b>PAUSE</b> - literally stop what you are doing</p> <p><b>BREATHE</b> - Take a slow deep breath, take a few breaths if you find that helpful</p> <p><b>OBSERVE AND NAME</b> - bodily sensations, thoughts, emotions (don't explain or tell a story, just name)</p> <p><b>PROCEED</b> - continue on with your day, repeat as needed</p>	<p><b>PAUSE BREATHE OBSERVE PROCEED</b></p>
<p><b>RELEASE YOUR TONGUE</b></p>	<p><b>Directs your body to RELEASE TENSION</b></p> <p>The tongue is part of your automatic nervous system and is a body part you can work with to tap into your relaxation response. You probably don't notice it but the tongue can get pretty tense pushing against your teeth or the roof of your mouth. This is a super easy practice. Push your tongue up against the roof of your mouth, notice the tension. Then let your tongue relax. Exhale and let everything go. Repeat as desired.</p>	
<p><b>GRATITUDE JOURNAL</b></p>	<p><b>Directs your attention to GRATITUDE</b></p> <p>Writing down what you are grateful for can increase happiness. At the end of each day, write down 2-3 things you are grateful for. For added benefit, try to do this practice at least once a day for a full week. And if you have more than two minutes free write about why you are grateful for each item on your list.</p>	
<p><b>SELF MASSAGE</b></p>	<p><b>Directs your efforts to a SELF-SOOTHING PRACTICE</b></p> <p>The neck holds a lot of tension, focus there to start. Knead the muscles at the back of your neck and shoulders. Make a loose fist and drum swiftly up and down the sides and back of your neck. Next, use your thumbs to work tiny circles around the base of your skull. Slowly massage the rest of your scalp with your fingertips. Then tap your fingers against your scalp, moving from the front to the back and then over the sides. Now massage your face. Make a series of tiny circles with your thumbs or fingertips. Pay particular attention to your temples, forehead, and jaw muscles.</p>	
<p><b>REST</b></p>	<p><b>Directs your efforts to an INTENTIONAL REST</b></p> <p>Find a place where you can lay down comfortably and not be interrupted. Lay on your back letting your legs and feet separate naturally and your arms relax at your sides. If you're comfortable doing so, close your eyes. Allow yourself to rest, knowing that the ground is supporting you. This isn't about falling asleep but rather giving your mind and body an opportunity to let go of tension, and reduce mental and physical fatigue. After two minutes, gently bring movement back to your body and continue with your day.</p>	
<p><b>KIND CHECK-IN</b></p>	<p><b>Directs your efforts to TREATING YOURSELF LIKE A FRIEND</b></p> <p>Check-in with yourself by asking, "how am I doing?" Allow yourself to answer honestly, opening to the joy and challenges you may be facing. Next, ask yourself, "what do I need?" This can be an immediate, later today, somewhat soon or long term need. This short self-compassion practice let's you notice what is happening in your life and how you can care for yourself, as you would a friend in need.</p>	
<p><b>MENTAL EXERCISE</b></p>	<p><b>Directs your attention to A BRAIN CHALLENGE</b></p> <p>Change the channel in your brain by challenging yourself to a brain game:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pick up an object and describe it in detail; color, texture, size, weight, scent, etc.</li> <li>Count backwards from 100 by 7.</li> <li>Spell your full name, and the names of three other people, backwards.</li> <li>Think of an object and "draw" it in your mind, or in the air with your finger.</li> </ul>	

