



Understanding and Dealing with Stress

Quick Fixes to Physical Effects of Stress:

Relax - Lower Body

Telling someone to relax is often easier said than done, but sometimes we hold a lot of our tension in our body and muscles. Shaking out a few of those kinks and curves in your body may make dealing with the kinks and curves life throws you a little easier.

Remember that these exercises are meant to help you relax and are just suggestions. Do not feel pressure to do all of them. Do not do any exercise that feels painful or uncomfortable. If you have any physical problems or disabilities, you should check with your doctor, nurse, or physical therapist.

When doing any exercise (even 'relaxation' exercises), don't push yourself too hard. After all, that's not relaxing! And, always use correct posture, move slowly and cautiously, and get the most from each exercise.

Back and spine



- Back and spine - sitting or standing straight, keep your hips facing forward and gently turn your upper body to the left; return to center; gently turn your upper body to the right; return to center; repeat; stop at any point if this doesn't feel comfortable or becomes painful
- Back and spine - sit up straight with your back against a firm chair or stand up straight with your back against the wall and your feet about a foot away from the wall; gently push your chest out so that your spine curves away from the wall/chair back; return to center with your spine flat against the wall/chair; pull your stomach in and curve your spine toward the wall/chair so that your shoulders and bottom pull away from the wall/chair; return to center; repeat; stop at any point if this doesn't feel comfortable or becomes painful

Feet, ankles, legs and hips



- Feet - wiggle your toes! Slip off your shoes; wiggle your toes and feet; try to grab the rug or a small object with just your toes
- Ankles - point your toes and feel the top of your feet and ankles stretch; straighten your toes and pushing down through your heels, pull your toes toward your shins to stretch in the other direction; (this is also great for tight calves!)
- Ankles - rotate your feet in circles; switch directions
- Legs and hips - in a seated position, straighten your legs in front of you; pushing down through your heels, pull your toes toward you and stretch your calves and thighs
- Legs and hips - squeeze that tush! Tighten and release your thighs and buttocks to return circulation to an often ignored area and work out those muscles; release; repeat