

STRESS RELIEF STRATEGIES

ROLL YOUR HEAD. Coax your neck and shoulder muscles into relaxation. Slowly and gently drop your head forward, roll it to your right shoulder and pause; roll it backward to the center of your shoulders and pause; roll it to your left shoulder and pause; roll it forward to the center of your chest and pause. Continuing to move slowly, reverse direction and go back around.

STRETCH. Wherever you are, pause to stretch your body and you will feel it loosen up and become more relaxed. Just stand up and reach for the sky! If you liked that, try a yoga class. Yoga opens up an entire world of stretches as well as deep breathing and mindfulness – all good for relieving stress. There are several free yoga classes every week for NYU students. Learn more [here](#) or search “yoga” on nyu.edu.

GET A MASSAGE. Have someone else help you relax. Physical touch can feel wonderful and supportive when you are tense. Treat yourself at a spa, pair up with a friend who needs stress relief and trade massages or enlist [NYU Stressbusters](#) for free 5-minute backrubs.

EXERCISE. All types of physical activity – aerobic, strength training, stretching – can relieve stress by improving overall wellbeing. Even the most gentle and basic exercises can boost endorphins and make you feel good and less stressed out.

STAY HYDRATED. Support vital bodily functions by drinking plenty of fluids. This can reduce the physical stress that you feel in your body and keep levels of cortisol, a stress

hormone, down. Drinking water is the best way to stay hydrated and NYC has excellent tap water, so keep a refillable bottle on you and sip regularly.

COUNT TO TEN. Slow down your thoughts to gain a more positive outlook on the stressful situation at hand. Breathe deeply, count slowly and ask yourself: “What’s the best way to handle this?”

STOP NEGATIVE THOUGHTS. In times of stress, the imagination can veer off in unpleasant directions if allowed to do so. To gain control of negative thoughts or worries, imagine yelling “STOP!” as loudly as you can in your mind. The more you practice this technique, the more it will help you to shut out angry or negative thoughts.

TAKE A BRAIN VACATION. Give yourself a moment to remember an experience that you enjoyed or to picture a place where you feel really good. Make a list of some of the places or activities that make you feel relaxed and good about yourself. Next time you need to “get away” refer to this list, close your eyes, and take a little break.

IGNORE THE PROBLEM. Many problems just don’t need to be dealt with or can’t be solved right now. Forget about the problem at hand by doing something more important or just relax and unwind. When you revisit the problem later, you may find it’s easier to deal with.

If your stress ever feels overwhelming, you can call the [Wellness Exchange](#): 212-443-9999.