



## Quick Relaxation Techniques



While it is ideal to have a regular time set aside for relaxation, sometimes one just needs a break from the stresses of a busy day—in the middle of the day.

These mini-relaxation techniques are powerful stress busters that you can reach for anytime. Whether you're preparing for an important meeting, stuck in traffic, or in the middle of an uncomfortable situation—these exercises can be a fast and effective tool to help you achieve a relaxed state so that you can confidently face the stresses of the day. So go ahead—take some time to try them all to see which ones work best for you.

### Breathing Techniques

These techniques counteract the effects of stress by **slowing the heart rate** and **lowering blood pressure**.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
					
Sit in a Comfortable Position	Close Your Eyes	Breathe In Slowly and Count to Five	Feel Your Belly Fill with Air	Breathe Out Slowly Through Your Mouth	Repeat This Cycle Five Times

#### Focused Breath (30 seconds)

1. **Sit back** in a comfortable position.
2. Begin breathing **slowly** and **naturally**.
3. Quietly whisper "**I am**" as you breathe in and "**at peace**" as you breathe out.
4. **Repeat** this several times.
5. **Feel** your entire body relax into the support of your chair.

#### Deep Breathing (30 seconds)

1. **Sit back** in a comfortable position.
2. **Place one hand on your belly**, so you can feel it rise and fall with each breath.
3. **Breathe in slowly** through your nose.
4. **Hold the air** within your lungs for 4 seconds.
5. Pucker your lips, and **slowly exhale** through your mouth for 6 seconds.
6. **Repeat** several times

## Tense & Release (2 min)

When we hold onto worries and stress, our muscles unconsciously tighten. Most of the time we don't even notice how tense we are--until the tension leads to aches, pain, and exhaustion.

This technique is about **helping your body let go of all that tension**. By first tensing your muscles and then loosening them, you force your body to release the stresses of the day.

### How to do it:

1. **Sit or lie** in a comfortable position.
2. While taking a deep breath in, **tense your entire body** by squeezing every muscle you can--from your face down to your toes.
3. **Hold this tension and your breath** for 5 seconds.
  - Notice the heaviness and tightness
4. **While exhaling, relax all of your muscles**, imagining all the built-up tension and stress in your body melting away into the ground
  - Notice the lightness of your body
5. As you take **slow, deep breaths, continue focusing** on how soft your muscles are and how relaxed you feel.
6. Continue this until you feel completely relaxed.



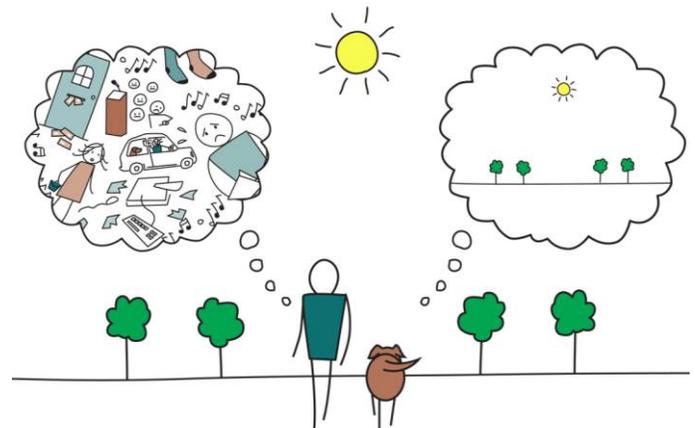
## Mindfulness (1 min)

Rather than worrying about the future or dwelling on the past, the act of mindfulness switches the focus to what's happening **right now**, allowing you to be **fully engaged in the present moment**.

Use this technique when you are at work, home, or even when you are doing activities such as walking, exercising, or eating...whenever you need a dose of calmness.

### How to do it:

1. The first time you try this, get in a **comfortable position**—sitting in a chair or cross-legged on the floor.
2. **Focus on an aspect of your breathing:**
  - The sensation of air flowing into your nostrils and out of your mouth
  - Your belly rising and falling
3. Now, begin to **widen your focus:**
  - a. The sounds you **hear**
  - b. The sensations you **feel**
  - c. The objects you **see**
4. **Embrace and consider** each thought or sensation without judging it good or bad.
5. If your mind starts to race, **return your focus** to your breathing and repeat the exercise.



Mind Full, or Mindful?