

Instant relaxation

I recently read an article on how people are becoming addicted to stress, so that they feel uncomfortable when they try to relax, and give up. This is very dangerous – stress wears out your body, not to mention affecting relationships and your ability to do your job well. Plus it's no fun. The test they said was that if you could sit and focus on one thing for 30 minutes you were OK. I always recommend sitting and doing nothing for 10 minutes – if your mind is going wild it's a sure sign you are stressed.

We are designed to be at our best when we are relaxed (we can be relaxed and alert), this idea that stress is good for you is a myth. Martial Arts Masters will tell you the more chaotic things get the calmer you should be. In fact being calm is what allows them to think and react clearly. We need that too. (and just for those disputing this – very high stress situations force you to forget everything except what is happening in the moment – this is the same as when you are truly relaxed, except when relaxed you can function better)

Here are some ways to instantly relax you, of course if you are very stressed you may need to do a few different ones to see a benefit:

1. Breathe. When we are stressed we breathe shallow so by focusing on breathing deeply our bodies are signalled to relax. There are many different breathing techniques and I suggest you learn what works best, and quickest, for you. A great one to try is taking 10 deep slow breathes, counting to 10 on each in and out breathe.
2. Aromatherapy. Certain smells instantly relax you and you can buy balms to rub under your nose or sniff. Try a few and find out what works best for you, some will invoke happy memories that also relax you. Wearing a perfume or lotion that you love also changes your mood.
3. Visualize a place that you feel relaxed. If you make it life size, colour, as if you are there (rather than seeing yourself there), listen to the sounds associated and notice how you feel then it will get stronger. Alternatively you could imagine a person who you feel relaxed around, or who makes you smile, or remember the last time you laughed..
4. Gratitude. Think of all the things you are grateful for. Sometimes even appreciating the fact you have a job/ partner/ family/ house etc. that is causing you stress when others don't can change your perspective.

5. Write. We usually get stressed because of the thoughts we are stewing on, and by writing them down we slow our thoughts and also get to see if they are helpful. Quite often the thoughts that are stressing us end up taking on a life of their own spinning stories that bear little resemblance to reality. It also releases tension when we get to vent our thoughts.
6. Meditate. Now this works wonders only if you have practised it regularly and found the quickest way to calm yourself down.
7. Be present. Right in this moment things are OK. By giving your full attention to an object in front of you it can clear your mind. By this I mean really look at something and notice the details. Often we are so stuck in our minds we don't even notice what is in front of us. I love to look out my window and focus on the trees swaying. (it can also help to think about how amazing something is – how brilliant nature or a person designed something, or how grateful you are for it.)
8. Music, or anything that absorbs you, will distract your stressful thoughts and therefore allow your body to relax. Do something you love, or at least plan to do something you love.
9. Repeat to yourself 'I am relaxed' or calm or anything soothing.
10. Act 'as if'. Either pretend you are a character in a movie, or just act as if you are relaxed. This helps detach from the stress, and is fun!
11. Stretch. Stress causes a build up of energy inside so by stretching, or jumping up and down, you can release it (obviously you have to bear in mind where you are before you do this!!)
12. Massage your ears, jaw line or your feet. All have points that will help release stress. You can also learn other points from relaxation books or shiatsu.
13. EFT. If you know the EFT tapping points run through them, if not it is worth learning them (I can send you some info). A quick one to do is to rub over your heart area and repeat 'I deeply love and accept myself even though I feel stressed'.
14. Drink water. Apparently not drinking enough water can weaken your body's ability to deal with stress.

Theses are all quick fixes that can help in the moment but obviously the real cure is to do daily relaxation techniques, and heal whatever thoughts you have that stress you out.

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My name is Kathryn Hodgson and I am trained in NLP Psychotherapy and Evolutional Kinesiology (amongst many other things!). If you want to learn more about how I can help you, or read any of my other free articles please visit my website at www.katalyst4change.co.uk

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