

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING STRESS

QUICKIE-MINIS

1. **Breathing Tensions Away**. Gently focus your attention on your feet. As you take in a slow, deep breath, imagine collecting all the tensions in your feet and legs, breathing them into your lungs and expelling them as you exhale. Then, with a second deep breath, all the tensions in your trunk, hands and arms, and expel that. With a third one, collect and expel all those in your shoulders, neck, and head. With practice, some persons are able to collect tensions in the entire body in one deep inhalation.
2. **4s* -- The Ultimate Mini-Quickie**. First, **smile** and make your eyes sparkle. Yes, you can do it. Smile and make your eyes sparkle. Then, take a deep breath. As you let it out, let your jaw **slack**, shoulders **sag**, and forehead **smooth** out. Go ahead, do it again: smile with sparkling eyes, deep breath, let it out and feel jaw go slack, shoulders sag, forehead smooth out. **4s* -- Smile, slack, sag, smooth**.
3. **Equalized Breathing**. Take 4 seconds to breathe in and 4 seconds to breathe out. That is, as you inhale, count “1 one thousand, 2 one thousand, 3 one thousand, 4 one thousand,” And as you breathe out, count similarly. Do this 4 or 5 times.
4. **Heavy Feet**. Just imagine that your feet and legs are getting heavier and heavier with each breath out. It’s almost as if you are wearing lead boots. My feet are heavy. My feet are heavy. Just imagine this for a few seconds. Or, perhaps your hands or some other part of your body works for you.
5. **Hands Warm**. Visualize your hands as warm, relaxed and warm. You might imagine them in a bucket of warm water, near a fire or in warm, wooly gloves. Perhaps you can even begin to feel the blood flowing down your arms into your hands.
6. **Deep Breath**. Take a deep breath. Hold it for about three seconds. Then let it out all at once (with a sigh, if you want). As you let it out, let your jaw relax, your shoulders relax and think “calm”. Let your teeth remain slightly apart (we should go through the day with enough space between our front teeth for a small pencil).
7. **Cool Air In, Warm Air Out**. With your eyes closed, shift your attention to the tip of your nose. As you breathe in, become aware of the air coming into your nostrils. As you breathe out, be aware of the sensations of the air passing back out. Perhaps you notice that the air coming in tends to be cooler and the air you breathe out tends to be warmer. Just be aware of cool air in; warm air out.
8. **Ideal Relaxation**. With your eyes closed, take a moment to create, in your mind’s eye, an ideal spot for relaxation. You can make it any place, real or imagined. (Mine is down an escalator and into a room with a super comfortable, overstuffed chair with walls and ceiling lined with a calming rug-like material and favorite music playing). See yourself in comfortable clothes. Now, once you have created it, go back there for 15 seconds or so whenever you feel the need to relax.