

Controlling your risk: Take charge of your stress

In any stressful situation you have 4 choices... accept, avoid, alter, adapt.

Relaxation exercises are a way for you to adapt or cope with stress.

Deep Breathing:

Most adults breathe with their chest muscles instead of their belly muscles. Learning to use your belly muscles can send more oxygen to your brain, heart and other organs. Deep breathing may lower your blood pressure, release “feel good” chemicals in the brain, reduce pain, muscle tension and sleeplessness.

Meditation

Start with 5 minute sessions and increase to 20 minutes. Choose a quiet, dim room. Sit up straight in a chair with your feet flat on floor.

- Close your eyes slightly.
- Choose a focus point a few feet in front of you.
- Take a deep breath using your abdominal rather than chest muscles.
- Breathe out through your nose to a count to 10.
- Continue deep breathing until you are able to dismiss your thoughts and sensations.
- Slowly return to normal breathing.



Day Dreaming takes two to three minutes. Imagine a scene in which you can be relaxed.

- Focus on the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings in your scene.
- Continue focusing on your dream scene until you are able to feel relaxed.



Muscle Relaxation, allow 20 minutes. Relax your entire body as much as possible.

- Imagine the tension draining away with each breath.
- Contract and release every muscle in turn... feet, ankles, legs, hips, back, hands, wrists, arms, shoulders, neck, and face.
- If some muscles are still tense, repeat that part of the exercise.
- When your muscles are relaxed, stay quiet for 5 minutes.

Remember, in any stressful situation you have 4 choices... accept or avoid it, alter or adapt to it.

Practice better ways to cope with stress!