

QUICK RELAXERS

Fast and Easy Ways to Relax at Work

It is always helpful to have a selection of quick-relaxers in your 'tool kit' for immediate access when the need arises at work. Whether you need to have a coping strategy after a high-stress meeting, or simply relieve the tension in your neck or shoulders, here are some helpful suggestions.

- **Standing Posture:** You can keep a relaxed posture when standing. Place your attention in your lower body. Keep your knees slightly bent and your back straight. Bring your attention to your upper body: take a deep breath into your diaphragm, release any tension in your torso, raise and lower your shoulders, twist your head from side to side, stretch and relax your jaw, open your eyes wide. Take a deep breath. Use the affirmation: *"Pause - Breathe - Smile."*
- **Mindful Walking:** As you move about during your work, use the opportunity when walking to focus on self-care. Bring your full attention back to your body (just for now, you are not thinking about the next 'to do'): feel the pressure under your feet, your legs moving freely, your arms loosely swinging at your waist. Notice any tension in your torso, shoulders and neck, and gently stretch it out. Then focus on taking some long slow breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth. Use the affirmation: *"Every breath, allowing." Or "I am where I am, and it's ok."*
- **Picture it:** Place a picture of a nature scene in frequent view – on a computer screen-saver or a photo on a wall or desk. Brain scan research suggests looking at and/or imagining a tranquil scene stimulates stress-reducing hormones. (Dentists put tranquil scenes for patients to look at on their ceiling!). Where could you put a picture of your favourite holiday destination for yourself?
- **Talk it out:** The opportunity to chat to someone about how you are feeling helps to relieve internal tension. Ask someone if they want to have a "coffee and chat."
- **Stretch:** If you are sedentary for long periods of time, use a timer app on your computer or phone to remind you to move and stretch more regularly – (every 15-20 minutes). Focus on stretching different parts of your body where tension can be easily held – especially the neck and shoulders. Google search: "stretching exercises at work" for plenty of free tips.
- **Calming Breaths:** Try breathing on a ratio of 1:4:2. Research from the University of California suggests this helps calm our nervous system. Breathe slowly and deeply into your diaphragm for a count of around four seconds (you choose): hold your breath for 4 times the in-breath (16 seconds) and breathe out twice the in-breath (8 seconds). Follow this cycle for 6 – 8 times for whenever you need it.
- **Palming:** Rub the palms of your hands vigorously and place them over your eyes to make it appear as dark as possible. Cup your palms so there is no pressure on the eye-balls. Then

open your eyes and look around. The warmth and darkness relaxes your eye-muscles and reduces eye-strain. Use this technique with calming breaths and notice how relaxed you feel.

- **Arm / Hand-Stroking:** A great calming technique that probably associates deep childhood memories of safety and relaxation. Use your right hand to gently stroke your left arm and hand. Then swap over.
- **Get outside:** It's not empirically proven but have a go anyway. On a break, take off your shoes and walk bare-foot on the ground-preferably damp soil or grass. Imagine that you are sending roots down through your feet, then imagine any stored electrical charge in your body (from strong wireless and electromagnetic radiation (EMR) environments), can travel down through your body into the earth. Take a few deep breaths. Appreciate nature.
- **Listening to Alpha Music:** Find some relaxing music to listen to in your breaks. Research found that listening to classical baroque music harmonises our brain-waves to the alpha frequency (7.5 – 12.5hzs) which has a corresponding calming effect on our body. You can also purchase music on-line designed to regulate and train brain-wave activity.
- **Fun and Laughter:** Look for ways to make work a fun place to be. A place where it is ok to laugh with the people around you. Buy a joke book, play practical jokes, do adult colouring-in, watch a funny Youtube clip, have a funny-hair day or a dress theme day.
- **Add your own:**

Focusing Question: What is the ONE THING you could commit to doing right now, using quick-relaxers, that would make the BIGGEST DIFFERENCE to your life? For example: you might buy a silly-sign joke book and make yourself, your colleagues and others laugh more often.

(Note: You may see opportunities for doing more than one thing, but starting with one for now will strengthen your momentum for change when you experience how it can improve your wellbeing).

My ONE THING to improve using quick-relaxers in my life right now is:

Focusing Question: What inspires you to want to make this change? What is your big WHY? Perhaps a Consequence Stretch might be helpful here?

Make a note in your action pages for ideas you want to use and share with others.