

Five-Minute Stress Busters

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- **STRETCHING.**

Sit in a chair with your upper body resting forward on your lap. Slowly roll up, starting at the base of your spine, until your back is straight. Stretch neck muscles by tilting your head to the right and slowly rolling your head down and to the left. Repeat a few times.

- **DEEP BREATHING.**

Inhale deeply, feeling your stomach expand. Hold your breath for a few seconds, and then slowly exhale, visualizing tension leaving your body.

- **MEDITATION.**

Close your eyes and mentally follow your breathing. Repeat a simple or soothing word with each breath or visualize a peaceful scene.

- **LAUGHTER.**

Just laugh out loud, or do something that will make you laugh such as reading a good book or watching a comedy on TV.

- **PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION.**

While sitting or lying in a relaxed position, tense the muscles of your feet as much as you can and then relax them. Tense and relax the muscles in your legs, arms, stomach, back, neck and head, one region at a time.

- **SELF-MASSAGE.**

Sit with your shoulders relaxed. Use your right hand to massage your left shoulder and neck, working your way up to the scalp. Repeat, using the left hand for the right shoulder.

- **SELF-TALK.**

Replace negative mental responses to stress, such as “I can’t cope,” with positive thoughts, such as “Everything is going to work out,” or “I know I can do it.”

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