



6 Quick and Easy Ways to De-feat Dis-stress

By Dianne Ruth, PhD

There are two basic types of stress. One is the self-imposed or good stress that creates a high level of energy, and is usually short-term. This happens when you push yourself to do a task.

Next is the other-imposed or bad kind of stress. This can be from threatening situations that cause you to feel powerless. They are usually outside of your control and often ongoing. If not managed properly, they may lead to emotional and physical distress.

What problems can stress cause?

Some common stress-related problems include

- pain
- fatigue ● hypertension ● high blood pressure ● anxiety
- depression ● ulcers ● high cholesterol ● heart disease
- backaches ● stroke ● sleeping problems ● headaches
- restlessness ● illness ● accidents ● overeating ● obesity
- food cravings ● anger ● abuse ● and more ...

What can be done to reduce stress?

Some stress-reducing tips include ● physical activity ● deep breathing ● meditation ● balanced nutrition ● reading ● loving a pet ● volunteer work ● a warm bath ● talking with a friend ● music ● imagining a peaceful place in nature ● or any other activity that provides pleasure and a sense of relaxation.

Quick and Easy Stress-Reducing Tips

The Triangle Squeeze

The following breath release technique may help reduce negative feelings like anger, anxiety, depression, stress, and fatigue, and it can generate energy.



In addition, studies show it may help control feelings of pain and cold, assist voice projection, counteract motion sickness and feelings of nausea. Perform one to three times, several times a day, plus whenever needed.

1. Sit straight and tall. **Lean** slightly forward, and **look up above eye level**. (Did you know that it is physically impossible to be depressed when you look up?)
2. Put the palms of your **hands together** in front of you as in a prayer position. Point your **elbows out** to the sides while keeping your **forearms level**, with your **fingers pointing up**.
3. **PUSH so pressure is felt** in the heels of the palms and under the arms.
4. **Take a deep breath**. While **breathing out, tighten the muscles** in your tummy, and **hiss** gently and slowly with a sssss noise, or about how a leaky balloon would sound. Relax at the end of the exhalation.

This exercise is believed to cause the adrenal glands to instantly stop producing the stress hormones that cause so much distress!

The Lean-to

This method does the same thing as the Triangle Squeeze. It also gives you a feeling of being grounded and centered.



1. **Stand** facing a wall about 2 or 3 feet away. Put **one foot forward**.
2. **Lean forward**, place your **palms, shoulder height**, on the wall and **push**.
3. Take a **deep breath** and hold it for as long as it is comfortable while **tightening the tummy muscles** and **looking above eye level**.
4. Then **relax** while letting your breath out. Put the **other foot forward and repeat** steps 1-2-3. Repeat one to three times up to several times a day, if needed.

With Another Person ...

This is an excellent grounding technique.

1. **Place hands** on top of each other's shoulders.
2. **Lean** firmly but gently **into the other person** while keeping **eye contact**.
3. Take a deep comfortable **breath** and hold it for a few moments while tightening the tummy muscles.

4. Then **relax** while letting your breath out. Put the other foot forward and **repeat steps 1-2-3**. Repeat 1 to 3 times up to several times a day, if desired.

Little Rag Doll



This simple movement gives the brain oxygen and gets rid of stress. Research shows it may make depression less, bring about better concentration, better memory, and more creative thinking. Plus, it makes you feel very relaxed.

1. From a sitting or standing position with your knees bent, **lean forward** as far down as is comfortable. Let your **head and arms dangle** toward the floor.
2. **Shake your shoulders** gently. **Feel all tension draining out** of your neck and shoulders, down your arms, out the ends of your fingertips, and into the floor.
3. When you are ready, **roll back up** slowly. While taking a **deep breath**, bring your **arms straight out** in front of you, **raise your arms slowly** as you **reach up** over your head and **lean back** slightly. **Look up** while enjoying an old-fashioned stretch.

Breath Hold



This is a popular technique with Olympic athletes! **For calming a racing heart beat, do the following steps one or more times as needed:**

1. Take a **deep breath**. Hold it for as long as it is comfortable.
2. **Next, push out all the breath** completely while making a silent "ha" sound. Resume normal breathing.

4-8-4 Breathing Technique

This breathing exercise causes a slight hyperventilation plus more oxygenation to the system. It also tends to balance and stimulate right and left brain activity.

Place your **index and middle finger on a center point between your eyebrows**. Alternate between holding your left and right nostril closed using your ring finger and then your thumb.

Repeat 2 to 3 cycles; maximum of 6 to 8 cycles at a time.

The following directions are for using your right hand. Reverse the directions if you use your left hand.

1. **Breathe in** through your **right nostril** (4 seconds) while **holding your left nostril closed** with your ring finger. **Hold your breath** (8 seconds).



2. Switch to holding your **right nostril closed** with your thumb while you **exhale through your left nostril** (4 seconds), pause (8 seconds).
3. **Breathe in** through your **left nostril** (4 seconds), while continuing to hold your **right nostril closed** with your thumb. Hold your breath (8 seconds).
4. Switch to holding your **left nostril closed** with your ring finger while you **exhale through your right nostril** (4 seconds), pause (8 seconds). Repeat.

NOTE: As with any exercise program, it is recommended that you check with your physician first before proceeding.



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Dr. Ruth works with clients by phone around the world, and in-person in her San Diego office. She specializes in short-term, drug-free recovery and has a 97% success rate.

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