

Creating Calm: Relaxing Your Mind and Body

Stress triggers

What are your triggers?

Signs of chronic stress

Emotional	Cognitive	Behavioral	Physical
Irritability	Mental slowness	Neglecting self-care	Grinding teeth
Nervousness	Inability to concentrate	Isolating	Headaches
Difficulty relaxing	Memory problems	Decreased productivity	Muscle tension
Jumpiness	Feeling overwhelmed	Decreased libido	Racing heart
Feeling helpless	Negative thoughts	Substance/alcohol misuse	Digestive issues
Apathy	Fuzzy thinking/brain fog	Weight loss/gain	Poor energy
Fatigue	Feeling disconnected from your body/dreamy		Trouble sleeping
Depression			Fidgeting
			General aches and pains

Fight or flight vs. relaxation response

Relaxation techniques to create calm

- **4 – 7 – 8 breathing**
 - Sit in a comfortable position.
 - Inhale through your nose to a mental count of 4.
 - Hold your breath for a count of 7.
 - Exhale completely through your mouth to a count of 8.
 - Repeat.
 - Aim to do these 10-20 minutes per day—you can break your sessions up.

- **Body scan**
 - Sit in a comfortable position.
 - Take a few deep belly breaths.
 - Focus on your feet by noticing any sensations. Breathe through any pain or discomfort to release the tension.
 - Continue to scan your body from feet to head. If you notice any uncomfortable sensations, focus your attention on them for just a moment. Breathe into them and see what happens. Notice and release any tension by breathing through it.
 - Take your time. It may take a few minutes for some areas of your body to release the tension.

- **Focused attention meditation**
 - Sit in a comfortable position.
 - Identify an object to focus on (e.g., look at something in the room, something you can hold in your hand, etc.).
 - Spend time focusing on your object, identifying all the distinct details.
 - Close your eyes.
 - Try and recall every little detail of this object in your mind's eye and see how powerful your perceptions are. Recall all the minute details down to each crease and each small little bump. Focus all your attention on this process and see what you recall.

Tips for getting started

- Start slow.
- Be consistent.
- Expect setbacks.

My takeaway
