

20 PROVEN STRESS-BUSTERS

Have office tensions got you on the verge of exploding? Do you feel like biting your computer, or maybe your boss? Help is on the way. The following relaxation techniques can help relieve both the physical and mental tensions that come with your exciting and stressful career.

- 1. BREATHE DEEPLY.** Close your eyes and breathe in slowly. Let the breath out for a count of five. Do this 10 times. Feel your body expand and contract with each breath.
- 2. STRETCH.** Raise your arms above your head. Stretch left and hold for four counts. Stretch right and hold. Reach straight up and stretch your back and shoulder muscles. Gently stretch your right ear toward your right shoulder. Repeat on the other side. Open your mouth as wide as you can and yawn.
- 3. EXERCISE.** Take a brisk walk at lunch or during a break. Climb the stairs.
- 4. EAT WELL.** Snack on fresh fruits, vegetables and whole-grain foods. They have lots of stress-busting B and C vitamins.
- 5. PUT A FLOWER ON YOUR DESK AND SPEND A MOMENT EVERY HOUR CONTEMPLATING IT.** Imagine you are an ant walking among the petals and taking in the colors and fragrance of the flower close up.
- 6. SKIP YOUR NEXT CUP OF COFFEE.** Try a new fruit juice instead.
- 7. EAT A TANGERINE.** Peel it slowly, noticing the mist and the fragrance. Observe the structure of each section and eat it as slowly as you can, savoring each bite. As you eat, imagine the sunny grove where the tangerine grew.
- 8. LAUGH.** Keep a good joke book handy. Or take a few moments to jot down the funny aspects of your present situation. Or think of a favorite scene from a funny movie.
- 9. CRY.** Bring an emotionally charged epic to work to read during breaks.
- 10. CLOSE YOUR EYES AND PICTURE A PEACEFUL PLACE:** a meadow, an ocean scene or a favorite room in your house. Visualize the scene in detail, with all the sights, sounds and smells.
- 11. LOOK OUT THE WINDOW.** Let your thoughts drift as you look.
- 12. TAKE A MENTAL BREAK.** Put your job aside for five minutes and concentrate on your life away from work. Make plans to do something pleasant for yourself or someone else when you get home.
- 13. VISIT A TREE DURING YOUR LUNCH BREAK.** Enjoy the texture of the bark and the pattern of its leaves against the sky.
- 14. MEDITATE.** Close your eyes, breathe slowly and deeply and repeat a soothing word with each breath. Do this for five or 10 minutes.
- 15. SAVOR A CUP OF HOT HERBAL TEA OR BROTH.** Close your eyes and inhale the steam.
- 16. FINISH AN EASY TASK,** something you've been putting off because it's "not important."
- 17. PLAY.** Work a crossword or other puzzle during a break.
- 18. GIVE YOURSELF A MASSAGE.** Rub your left shoulder, neck and scalp with your right hand, and repeat on the right side with your left hand.
- 19. SIT UP STRAIGHT IN YOUR CHAIR,** then drop your upper torso, arms and head between your knees. Exhale and then take a deep breath as you slowly roll up, beginning at the base of your spine.
- 20. EXPLORE AS MANY VARIATIONS OF YOUR SITTING POSITION AS YOU CAN** while maintaining good basic posture: feet flat on the floor in front of you, lower back supported against your chair and keeping an imaginary straight line from your ears, through your shoulders to your hips.

Can you think of any more stress-busters that work for you?:
