

Stress Busters from Dr. Stephen Green

"Help!, When can I find the time to relax?"

We have all been told that it takes a lot of time to slow down and busy people don't have time to slow down. Or maybe you have heard the saying: "When the going gets tough, the tough get going!". These are standard Type A personality slogans. Type A personalities are known for their heart attacks, ulcers and burnout.

Today's stress includes major job insecurities based on downsizing, as well as the other uncertainties in the changing economic climate of an emerging global economy. Workers are now asked to perform more work in less time. With the advent of the pager, cell phone and modern workers and managers are expected to be available at all hours of the day. Having to *on call* is extremely stress producing. So where do you find the time for relaxation—you know—*"To Cool Out."*

With the mini-relaxation that follows you can find time anytime during the day. If you have other more extensive relaxation techniques, There are times and places available even in the workplace.

1. The bathroom is a wonderful place to cool out, even when you don't need to use the facilities. Take a few minutes and do your deep relaxation.
2. Take a different break time as others (any excuse will do) so you can go someplace quiet.
3. Use the stairs to go to the next floor: good exercise and a place to practice "moving meditation" and relaxation.
4. Don't start the commute with everyone else, play your relaxing music in the car and practice deep muscle tension release. You will be ready for the highway and arrive home a better person.
5. The 6 second mini-relaxation can be done at your desk along with stretching and deep breathing.
6. Make an appointment with yourself: on the calendar, set up a reminder in your computer, or ask someone to remind you that you have an appointment to relax.
7. Form a group in the office to practice together during breaks, lunch or at other special times. It really helps knowing others are practicing too.

Six-Second Mini-Relaxation

The quieting reflex is a 6 second mini-relaxation technique that is designed to counteract emergency stress reactions. It relieves muscle tightening, jaw clenching, breath holding, and activation of the sympathetic nervous system. To be effective, it should be practiced frequently throughout the day and at the moment a stressful situation arises. It can be done with your eyes open or closed.

Step 1: Become aware of what is annoying you: ringing of the phone, a sarcastic remark, the urge to smoke, a worrisome thought—whatever. This becomes the cue to start the quieting reflex.

Step 2: Repeat the phrase. "Alert mind, calm Body" to yourself.

Step 3: Smile inwardly with your eyes and your mouth. This stops facial muscles from making a fearful or angry expression. The inward smile is more a feeling than something obvious to anyone observing you.

Step 4: Inhale slowly to the count of three, imagining that the breath comes in through the bottom of your feet. Then exhale slowly. Feel your breath move back down your legs and out through your feet. Let your jaw, tongue, and shoulder muscles go limp.

With several month's practice the quieting reflex becomes an automatic skill.

Good Luck! You have embarked on a journey that makes Life a new experience each day.

For more information on stress reduction techniques, nutrition or corporate seminars

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