

FIVE-MINUTE STRESS-BUSTERS

Most psychologists agree that some stress is good, providing you don't get more than you can handle. These exercises can help you handle the stress that's part of your busy and productive life.

	WHEN I TRIED THIS, I FELT	
	MENTALLY	PHYSICALLY
Deep Breathing. Inhale deeply, feeling your stomach expand. Hold your breath for a few seconds, then slowly exhale, visualizing tension leaving your body.		
Meditation. Close your eyes and mentally follow your breathing. As you exhale, mentally repeat a simple or soothing word with each breath. Or visualize a peaceful scene. Do this for at least five minutes or, for more benefit, up to 30 minutes.		
Self-Talk. Replace negative mental responses to stress, such as "I can't cope," with positive ones, such as "Everything is going to work out" or "I know I can do it."		
Laugh. Just laugh out loud, or do something that will make you laugh such as reading a joke 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; then relax them, and notice the difference in feeling. Tense and relax the muscles in your legs, arms, stomach, back, neck and head, one region at a time. When finished, remain in a state of complete relaxation for a few minutes.		
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 in both directions.		
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.		