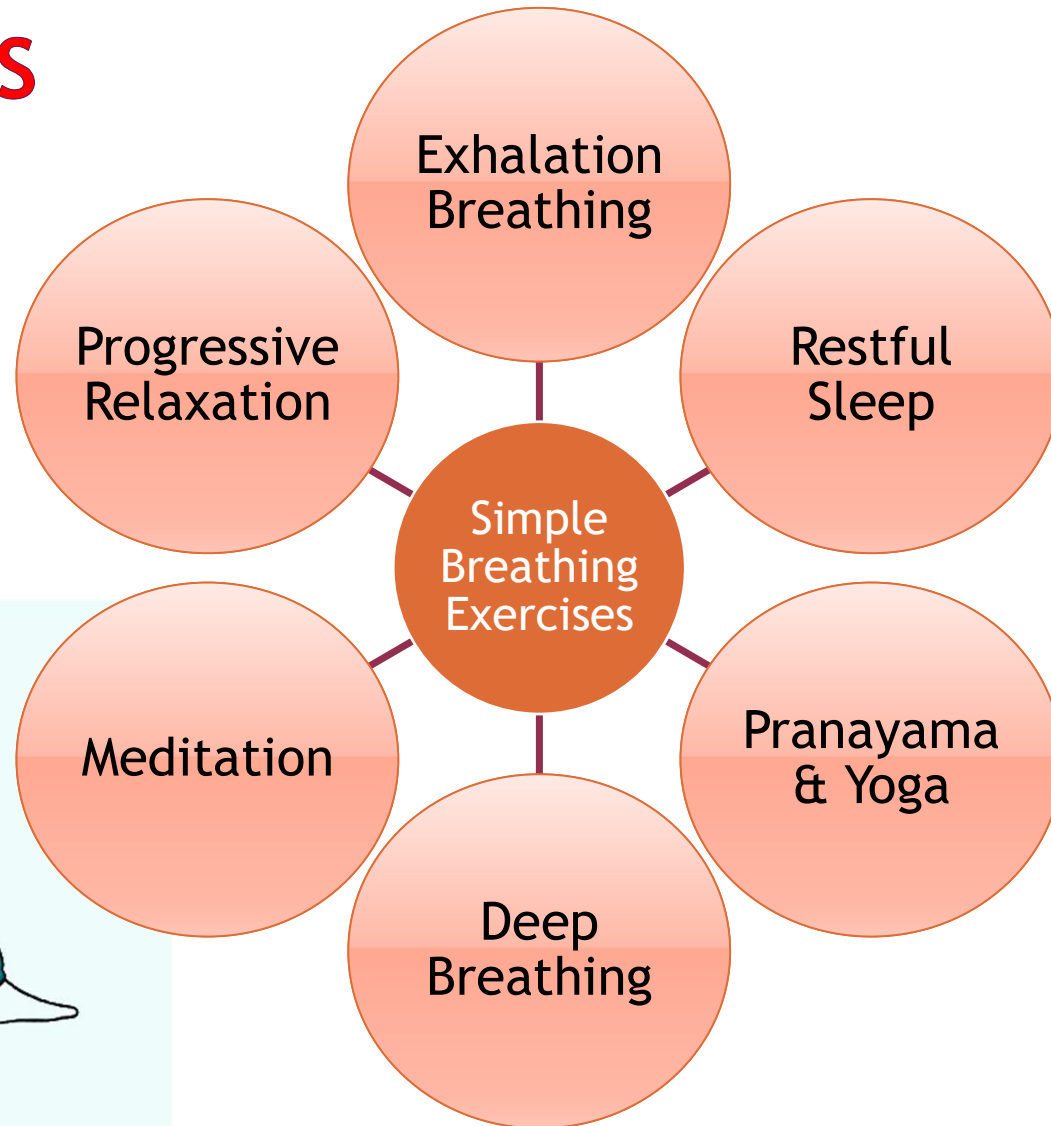




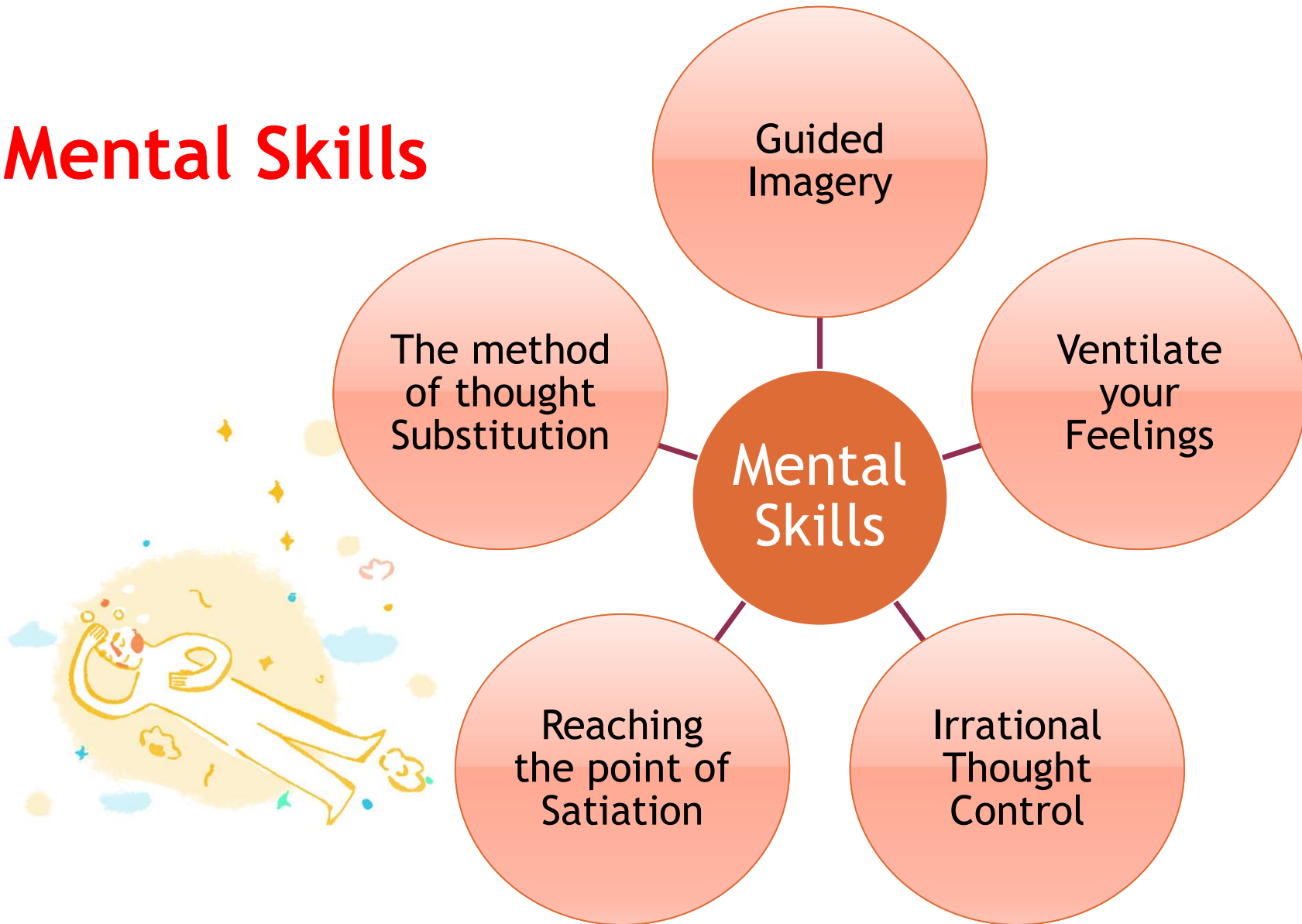
STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

- Stress and coping are packed into our day-to-day life.
- Encountering stress and coping with it becomes so common and frequent that sometimes it passes as a part of our daily routine.
- In the busy urban life, the fact that the stress levels overshoot the optimum stress level (OSL) goes unnoticed by the individual experiencing it.
- The consequences of a prolonged experience of stress may have their own impact on the physical, psychological and behavioral dimensions of the individual.
- The outcome of these may also have their influence on the professional and social life of the individual.
- The reason for advocating effective stress management is to prevent and overcome the adverse impacts of stress and restore well-being.

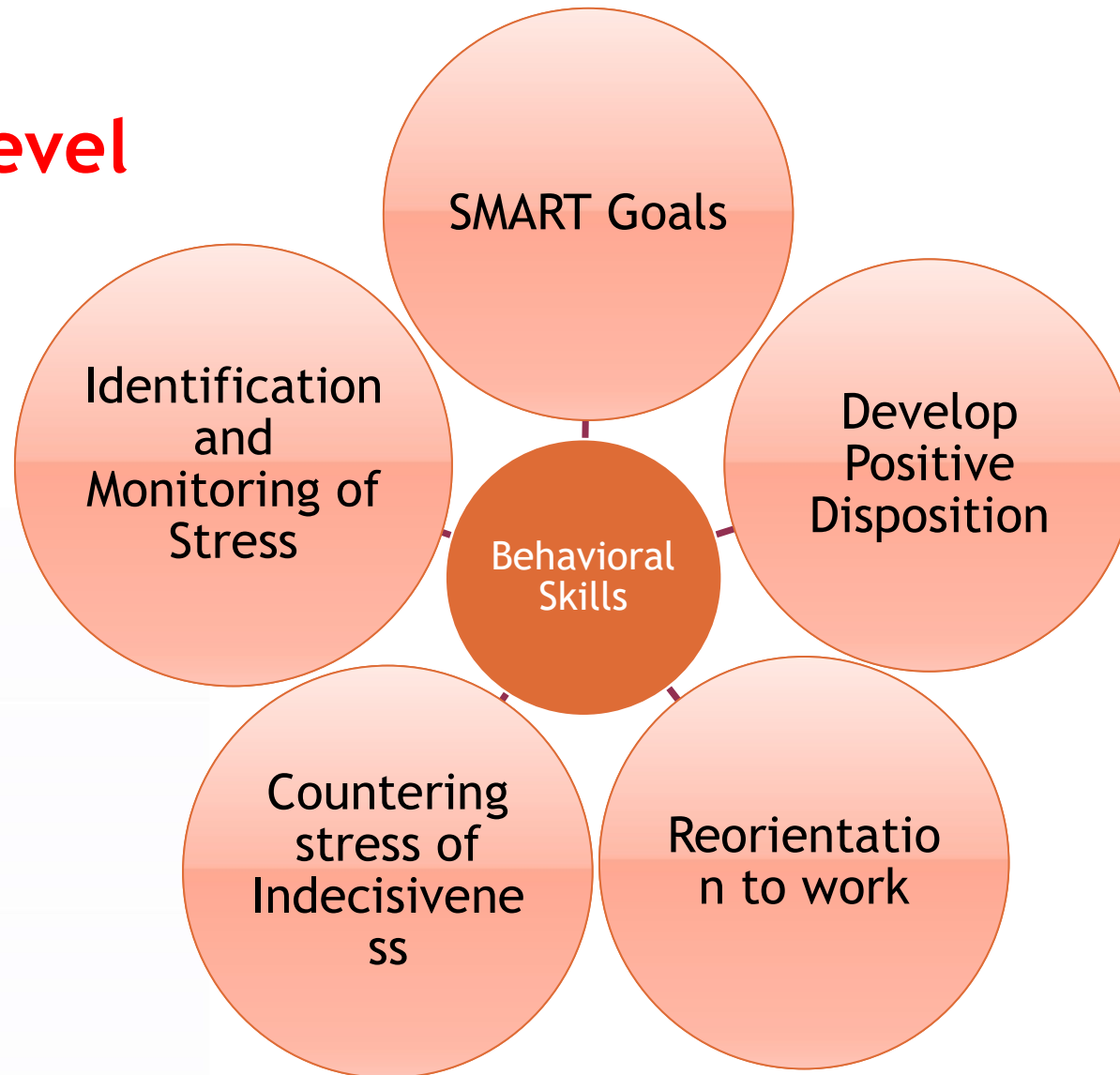
PHYSICAL SKILLS



Mental Skills



Behavioral Level

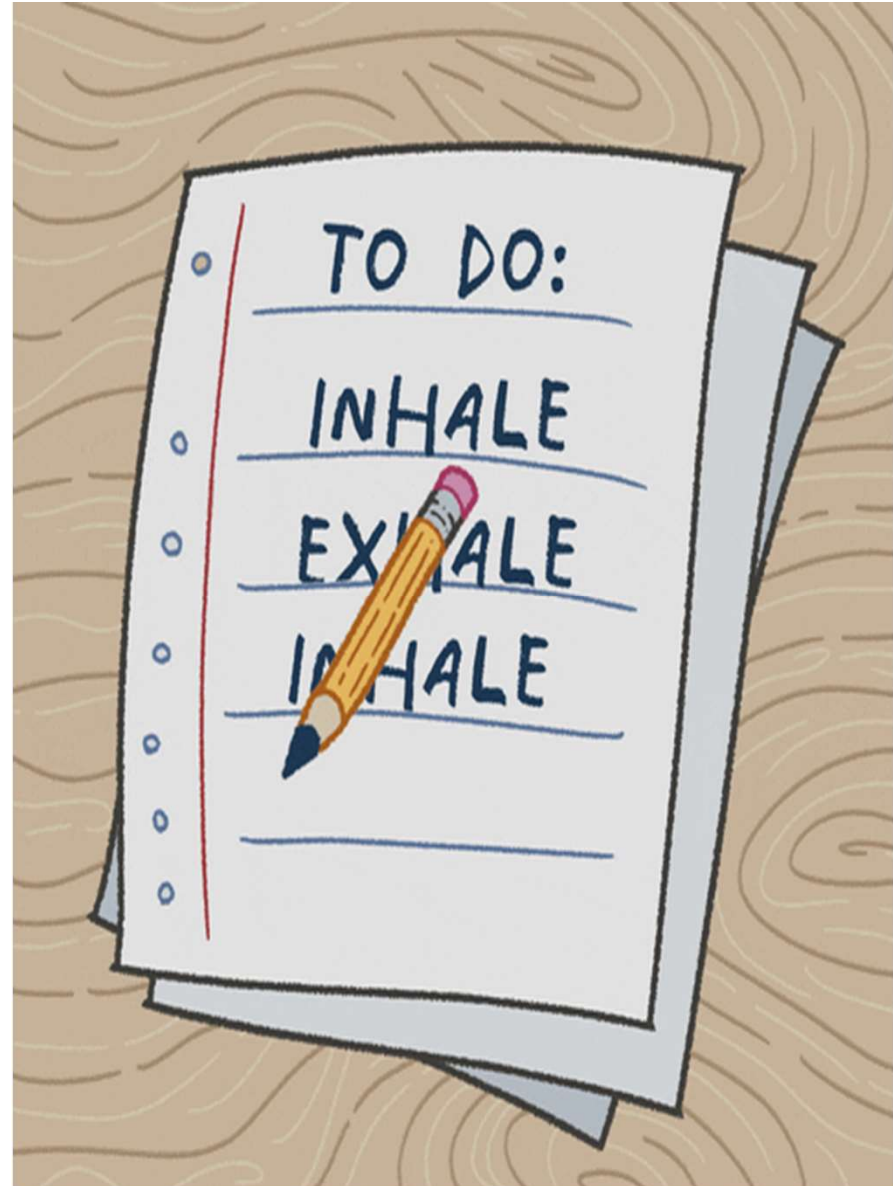


DEEP BREATHING

- ⦿ This can be done anywhere and anytime.

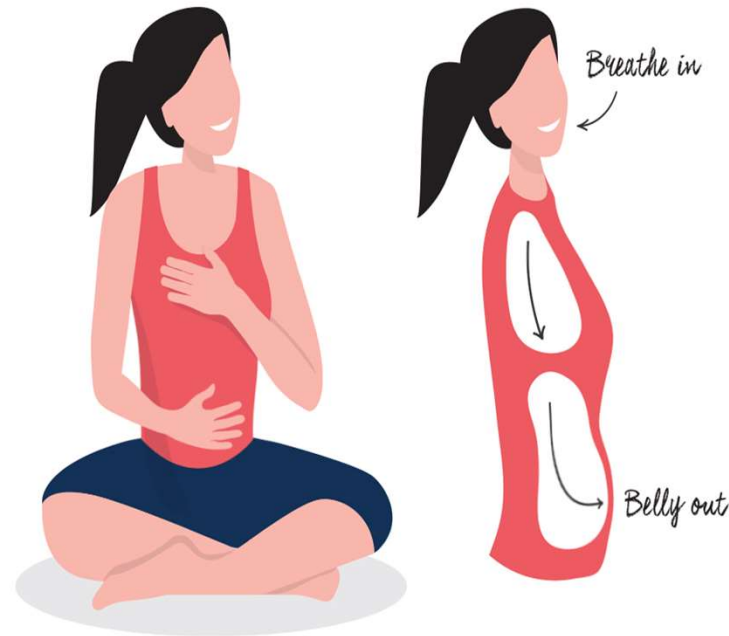
If you feel overworked in the office,
while watching television,
travelling in a bus or train,
waiting for your turn at a counter.

- ⦿ Deep breathing provides extra oxygen to the blood.
- ⦿ This in turn re-energizes the body and promotes relaxation.



STEPS

- ⦿ Slowly inhale through your nose, expanding your abdomen before allowing air to fill your lungs.
- ⦿ Reverse the process while exhaling. Contract your abdomen before allowing air out of your lungs.



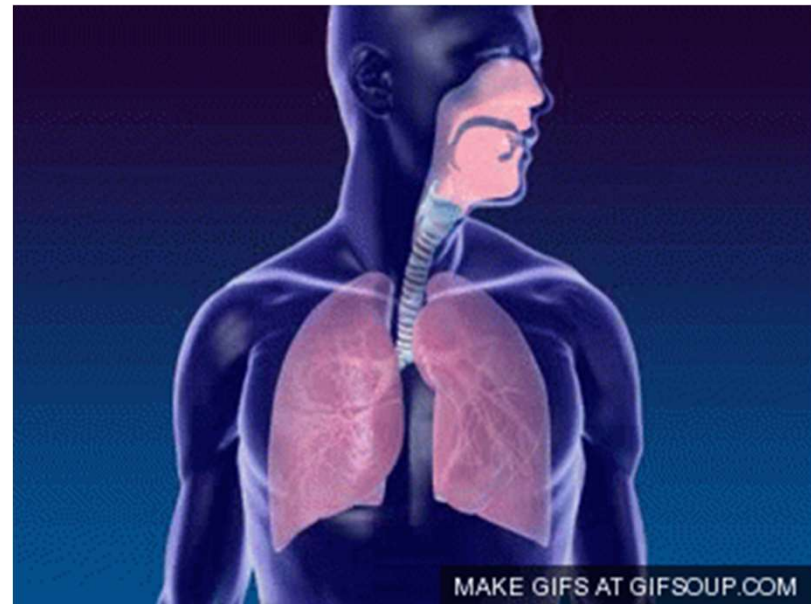
EXHALATION BREATHING

- ⦿ This technique slows your breathing and calms you down.
- ⦿ By practicing this, you are likely to attain a slow rhythm in your natural breathing. This in turn helps you to remain calm.



STEPS

- ◉ Spread a carpet or mat on the floor.
- ◉ Lie down on your back with your arms at your sides.
- ◉ Begin to breathe in slowly. As you do so, raise your arms towards the ceiling. Move them all the way up and over your head to the floor. Complete your inhalation.
- ◉ Reverse the order. Breathe out slowly and smoothly. As you do so, return your arms to the original position, that is, to your sides.
- ◉ After practicing this several times, try to inhale and exhale without moving your arms.



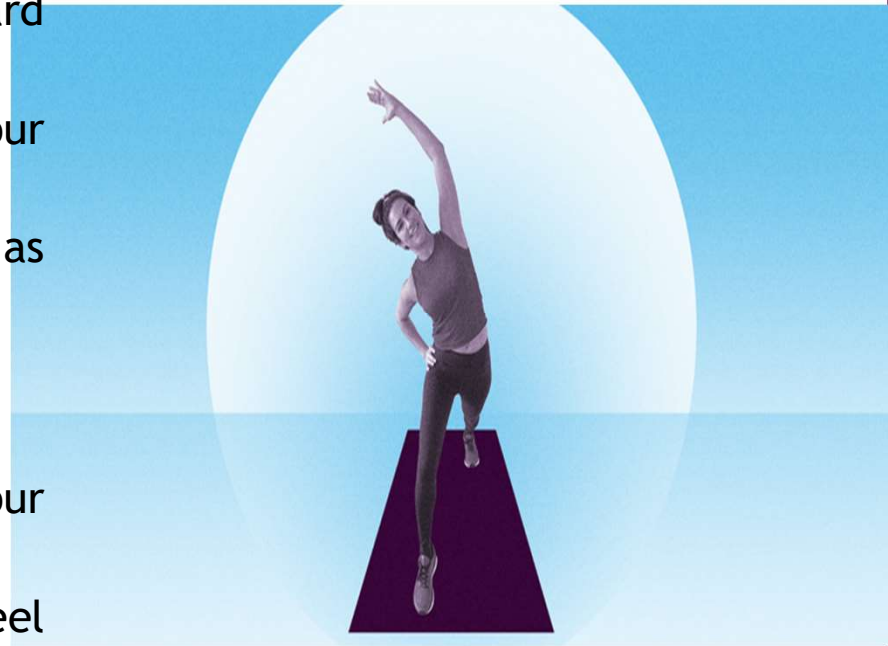
STRETCHING EXERCISE

- ◉ This exercise is effective for those involved in long hours of a sedentary job.
- ◉ The long rigid postures assumed while working on computers, doing deskwork or assembly line work creates tension in certain muscular points.
- ◉ Doing stretching exercise intermittently helps release muscular tension and rigidity.
- ◉ If done correctly, this helps in reducing stress and promoting relaxation. One should be careful not to bounce while stretching, so as not to injure the muscles.



STEPS

- ◉ Identify the muscles suffering tension. One may start from the neck and move downward or vice-versa.
- ◉ Breathe in slowly and do not hold your breath.
- ◉ Stretch your neck to the back, and exhale as you stretch.
- ◉ Imagine tension leaving as you exhale.
- ◉ Inhale as you release the stretch.
- ◉ Close your eyes for better awareness of your body's response.
- ◉ Take other areas of the body where you feel muscular tension and repeat the process. Take these areas to their comfortable limit.



RESTFUL SLEEP

- ⦿ Sleep is essential for the rejuvenation of body cells and metabolic functioning.
- ⦿ One golden rule to fight sleeplessness is **'do not even try to sleep'**.
- ⦿ The best thing is to get out of the bed and sit in a comfortable chair. One may choose to read a book, watch television, play solitaire or take up some simple relaxing activity like filling water into bottles, or filing and painting your nails.



- ◉ Stay awake as late as you like.
- ◉ Before you realize you would find yourself dozing, if not falling asleep.
- ◉ The idea is to divert your body and mind from the anxiety of not being able to sleep.
- ◉ If you have a chronic problem of insomnia, it is advisable to seek professional help.



PRANAYAMA AND YOGA

- ◉ Conditions under which the body is over-worked or the mind is stressed, the breath becomes faster or constricted.
- ◉ When the body is in rest and the mind is calm, the breath is slow and calm.
- ◉ Regulation of breathing lowers the heartbeat and moderates blood pressure.
- ◉ This control on the physiological state results in physical relaxation.
- ◉ The message of this relaxation reaches the mind.
- ◉ The brain in turn sends the message of relaxation to different parts of the body.
- ◉ This enables the person to experience the state of relaxation.

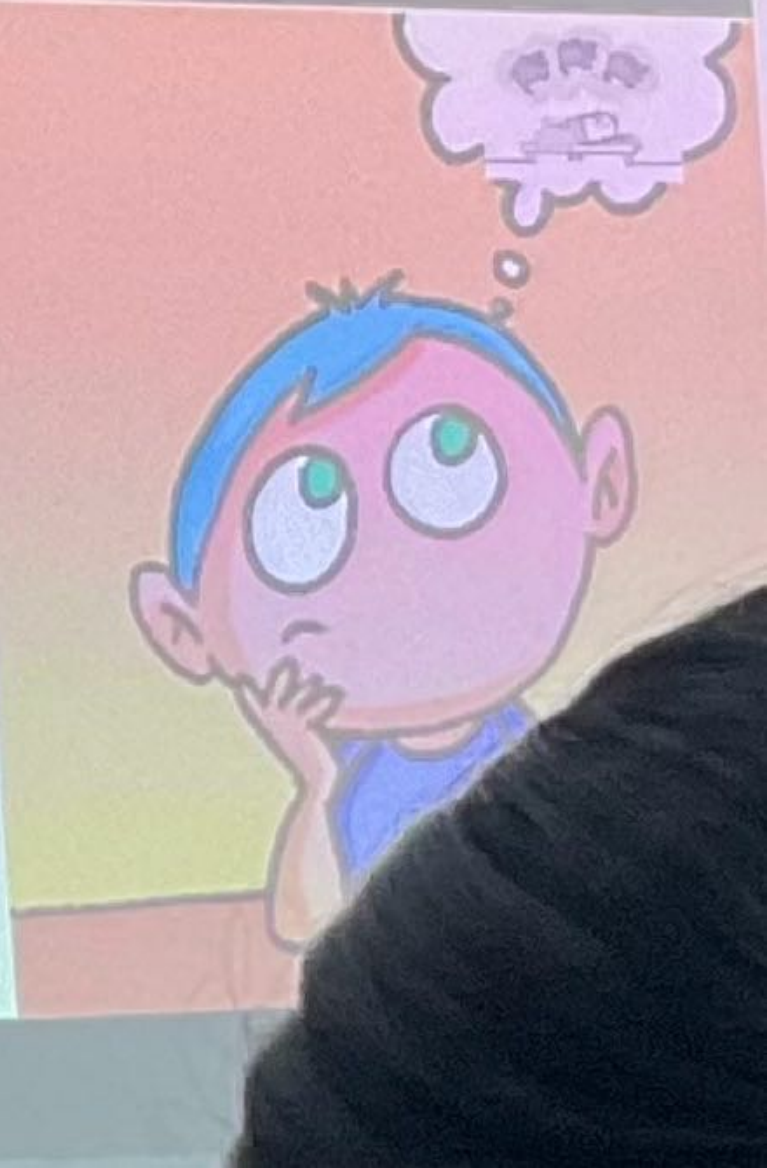
STEPS

- ◉ Hold your right hand up. Curl your index and middle fingers towards your palm.
- ◉ Close the left nostril by pressing gently against it with your ring finger.
- ◉ Inhale through the right nostril. The breath should be *slow, steady and full*.
- ◉ Now, close the right nostril by pressing against it gently with your thumb. Open your left nostril by relaxing your ring finger. Exhale fully with slow and steady breath.
- ◉ Now, inhale through the left nostril, close it and exhale through the right nostril.
- ◉ This is one complete round.



REACHING THE POINT OF SATIATION

- In this method, you may allow upsetting thoughts to creep in quietly and peacefully.
- Indulge yourself in imagining the dreadful consequences of the event.
- Allow a free flow of imagination, where you travel from bad to worse and the worst.
- Do it in a single sitting.
- Before you realize, you will find yourself reaching a point where your imagination of the worst possible consequence stops.



THE METHOD OF THOUGHT SUBSTITUTION

- A negative and upsetting thought cannot be pushed out.
- You must try to fill the vacuum with a substitute.

- Think of those neutral, harmless or less harmful possible effects of the event.
- Continuous thought substitution may train the mind and body to be resistant to stress. However, this must be practiced carefully by using discretion. Situations calling for emergency response cannot afford such reactions.

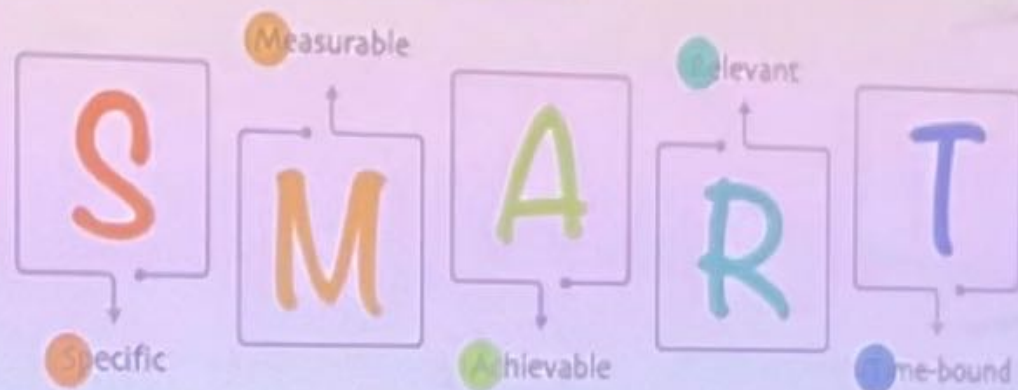


Behavioral Level



SMART Goals

S M A R T



❑ Specific

- Eg: 'I will be a changed person' : non-specific.
- 'I will not shout at my wife' : specific and hence verifiable.



☐ Measurable

- 'I will improve my knowledge base' : general and also not measurable.
- The alternative measurable goal would be, 'I will read at least two research articles on my topic everyday.'

Daily Goal

☐ Measurable

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Daily Goal



❑ Achievable

- An achievable goal necessarily estimates one's own internal and external resources.
- Eg: A school student who failed in the exam cannot achieve the goal of obtaining the first rank in the next exam. The achievability increases if he aims at acquiring more than 50 per cent marks in the next exam.



□ Timeline

- Goals without any time lines are found to be non-specific and not measurable.
- A goal such as, 'I must submit the accounts as soon as possible' does not help in reducing stress.
- On the other hand, a slightly different goal that says, 'I must submit the account before 15 March', is more action driven because of the time line.

DEVELOP POSITIVE DISPOSITION

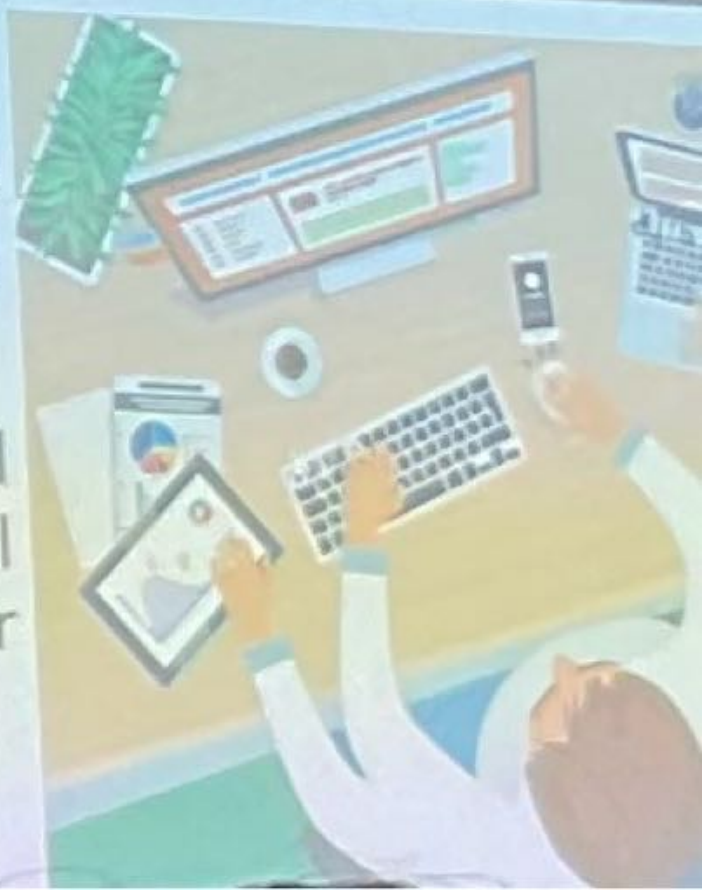
- One major reason for this is a tendency to over-estimate one's own capacity and assume a 'superman' or 'superwoman' role in executing every bit of the task.
- Doing one thing at a time enhances the efficiency and quality of work while reducing stress.



- A highly task-oriented person may set high standards and be critical of those who tend to commit mistakes.
- By doing so, the stress levels shoot up not only for those who receive criticism, but also for those who criticize.

REORIENTATION TO WORK

- Demands from various sources, pressure of time lines and conflicts cause a high degree of stress.
- There may be times when professional demands, family problems and social obligations independently call your undivided attention.

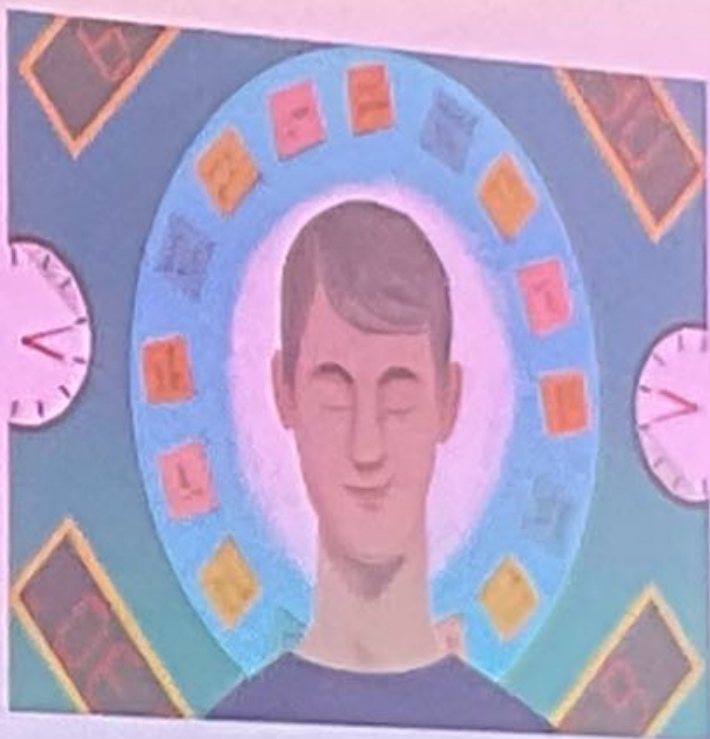


- Time management techniques are most crucial here.
- It is essential to set clear priorities and be assertive about postponing the low priority tasks.

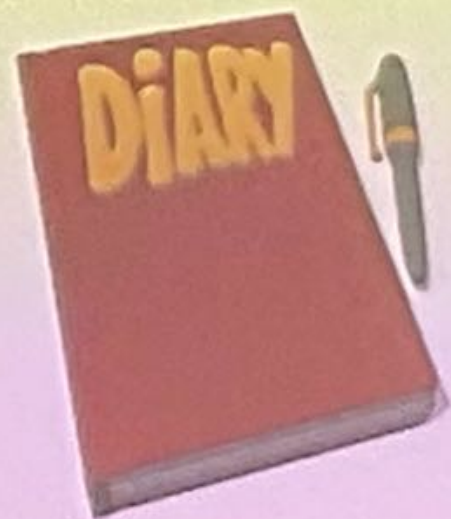


IDENTIFICATION AND MONITORING OF STRESS

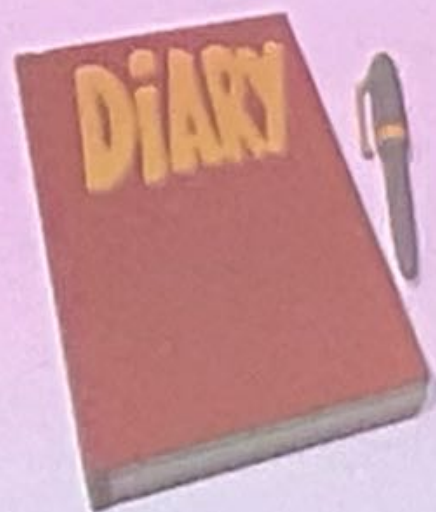
- There is a chance that individuals remain stressed for long periods.
- Before the stress induced by one incident slopes down, another related or unrelated incident might trigger further stress.
- Continuation of such major or minor incidents fixes an individual in a stressed condition for a long duration, without a pointed awareness of stress-inducers.
- For effective monitoring and management of stress, it is necessary that one identifies the stressors and is aware of the thoughts and feelings associated with it.




- An easily monitored form of stress management is maintaining a stress diary.
- Each date on the calendar may be divided into five columns, such as, the incident, seriousness, people involved, stakes involved and the action taken up.
- Briefly describe the incident in column one.



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- Briefly describe the incident in column one.
- Assess the degree of seriousness of the incident in the second column.
- Identify and record the people immediately and remotely involved in the incident, naming them separately under 'direct and indirect involvement'.



- 
- Cultivate the habit of reading this diary once a week or fortnightly.
 - This helps in identifying your major events or people as sources of stress.
 - Such a close monitoring of stress helps as a good diagnostic technique, kindling the motivation in you to change your strategies for a productive outcome.

