



COPING STYLES

- There are different methods of classifying coping.
- **Lazarus and Folkman** (1984) have classified coping on the basis of the approach taken up by the individual.
- According to them, coping is classified into **eight types**.

1. Confrontive coping

- ❖ Confrontive coping can be best explained as ‘taking the bull by horns’.
- ❖ It can be identified when one explains his/her behaviour in the following ways:
 - ‘I stood my ground’,
 - ‘I discussed/ argued till the other person changed his/her mind’
 - ‘I persisted until the other person conceded to my point’.



2. Planful problem solving



- ◉ Planful problem solving is marked by objectivity.
- ◉ It is conspicuous by an absence of emotions, and a significant pursuit of a solution in the most logical way.
- ◉ This is a coping technique where the person encountering stress chalks out a definite plan of action and follows it.
- ◉ Planful problem solving refers to cognitive appraisal involving objective assessment and logical thinking.

- ◉ The behavior of the person following this coping suggests the following tone:

‘I know what has gone wrong. I also know what has to be done to rectify it. I have more than one way of handling it. If one approach fails, I have a contingency plan.’



3. Seeking social support

- ◉ Coping through seeking social support refers to a situation explained by expressions and statements like,
 - ‘I sought help’,
 - ‘I cried on his shoulders’,
 - ‘I shared my feelings with him and received good moral support’

Copes with a stress situation by tapping resources from one's interpersonal relationship is called coping through seeking social support.



- A stress situation typically creates ripples at two levels—a concrete external problem out there and the subsequent emotional disturbance within.
- So coping through seeking social support can be a **request for a concrete support** in solving the problem, or **finding an emotional anchorage** in others to absorb the shock or **share and lighten one's feelings**.
- Both are considered important functions in reducing the stress and restoring equilibrium. This depends upon one's social support network.

- Coping through seeking social support has one of the three possible consequences—

positive support



negative support.



failure to receive
positive support

Failure to receive positive support is any time tolerable than receiving negative support. This is because negative support, instead of reducing the stress level, contributes to the existing stress level.



4. Positive reappraisal

- Coping through positive reappraisal evolves as an aftermath stage in the process of coping, along the stress and coping spiral. This is a situation where an individual thinks,

‘Well, it is all for my own good’,

‘God’s wish was done’,

‘I never knew it would bring-in such positive results’.

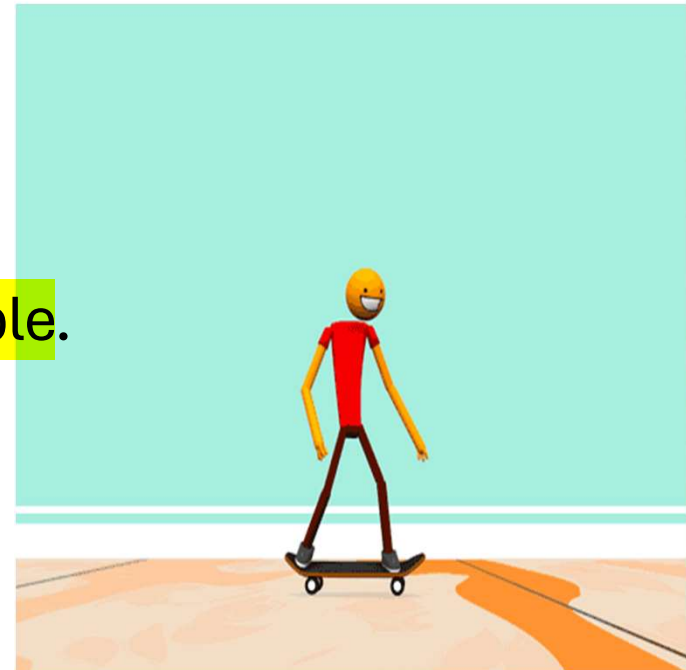
‘Why did I not accept it at the very beginning?’

‘why didn’t I think of it earlier?’



5. Distancing

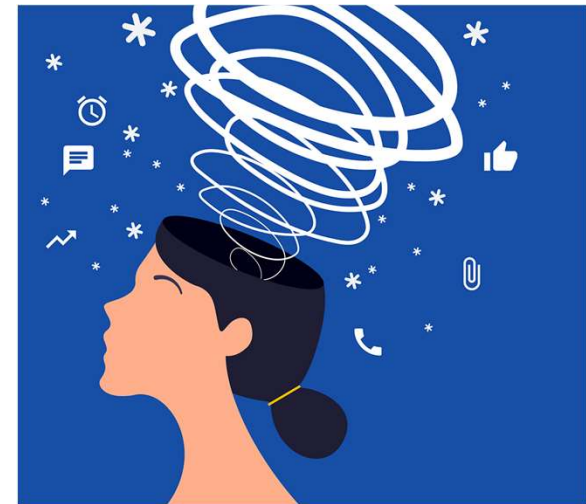
- ◉ Distancing refers to that strategy of coping where one tries to make light of the situation. Some of the typical examples are—refusing to get too serious about it; carrying-on as if nothing had happened; or refusing to think too much about it.
- ◉ Such reactions automatically lead to a refusal or avoidance of talking about it. This strategy is adopted when the stakes involved are already lost and not retrievable.



- For example, one of the reactions after an estranged marriage resulting in divorce may be, ‘**Well, I would rather not talk about it**’;
- Or, one may even say playfully, ‘**Oh! That was just a child’s play and we are now grown ups**’.
- In case of an interpersonal conflict coping through Distancing may have a better pay-off because it would be easy to rebuild the relationship with the person with whom one had a conflict.
- However, if one resorts to Distancing in situations where action is called for to resolve a concrete problem, the result will be undesirable.

6. Self-Control

- ◉ When an individual experiences severe stress in a problem situation but keeps everything close to his/her heart, s/he is coping through 'Self-Control'. Typical expressions of self-control are—
 - 'I kept my feelings to myself',
 - 'I kept others from knowing how bad things are'
- ◉ Self-Control produces desirable effects only when the person under stress has a high internal locus of control and the situational complexity is such that only the person concerned appreciates the reality of it.



7. Escape–Avoidance

- ◉ Coping through Escape–Avoidance refers to a situation when the individual runs away from a situation by turning to fantasy or other similar means. The common explanations are—

‘I tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, taking drugs’.

- ◉ Here the focus is shifted away from the original problem and is fixed elsewhere.
- ◉ This in turn does not resolve the problem, but the person finds a temporary escape from the pressures of managing the emotions.



8. Shifting the burden on supernatural element

- ◉ Coping through turning to God or religion is a typical strategy when the stressful event is irreparable in nature, or the loss one faces is irretrievable.
- ◉ Shifting the burden to God or religion pays off in managing acute emotions.
- ◉ This strategy is also adopted in other situations where the person's locus of control is external.

Common expressions of this strategy of coping are,

'I prayed to God',
'I vowed to fast',
'I changed my religion',
'I joined the "Guru"',
'I read *Bhagavad Geeta*'
'I visit the temple every day',
'I vowed to do 108 "*pradakshina*"'



9. Denial

- ◉ Denial is perceived as the least adaptive strategy to cope with illness-related stress.
- ◉ Denial of reality drives a person to turn away from the reality
- ◉ Research shows denial as a coping mechanism is associated with poor physical and mental health.
- ◉ Individual refuses to recognize or acknowledge objective facts or experiences. It's an unconscious process that serves to protect the person from discomfort or anxiety.

Eg: A loved one may insist that she doesn't have a problem with alcohol, despite the fact that it interferes with work and family life.



10. Mental Disengagement

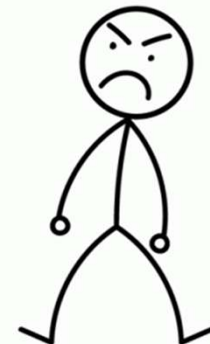
- ⦿ The “disengagement” category of coping involves strategies that are aimed at diverting from the stressor and/or its related emotions.
- ⦿ The “engagement” category of coping reflects coping strategies in which “a person takes charge in tone”
- ⦿ People who use disengagement coping generally are not able to deal with the stressor and as a result are more likely to experience the negative consequences of the stressor compared to people who engage in more active coping strategies

- ◎ People who actively deal with the situation at hand, are more likely to experience that they are in charge of the situation and are able to change something about it, whereas those that avoid or ignore stressful events experience a lack of possibilities to confront the stressor

E.g. Not attending classes regularly because of the fear of exams

11. Accepting responsibility

- ⦿ Taking responsibility for your actions involves owning up to the positive and negative consequences of your choices and behavior, rather than attributing them to external factors or other's actions.
- ⦿ Ruminating, complaining and engaging in negative self-talk can make you feel like you've lost control, fostering low self-esteem.
- ⦿ Allow yourself to feel negative emotions when they arise, but try your best not to blame others, the world, or other elements outside your control.

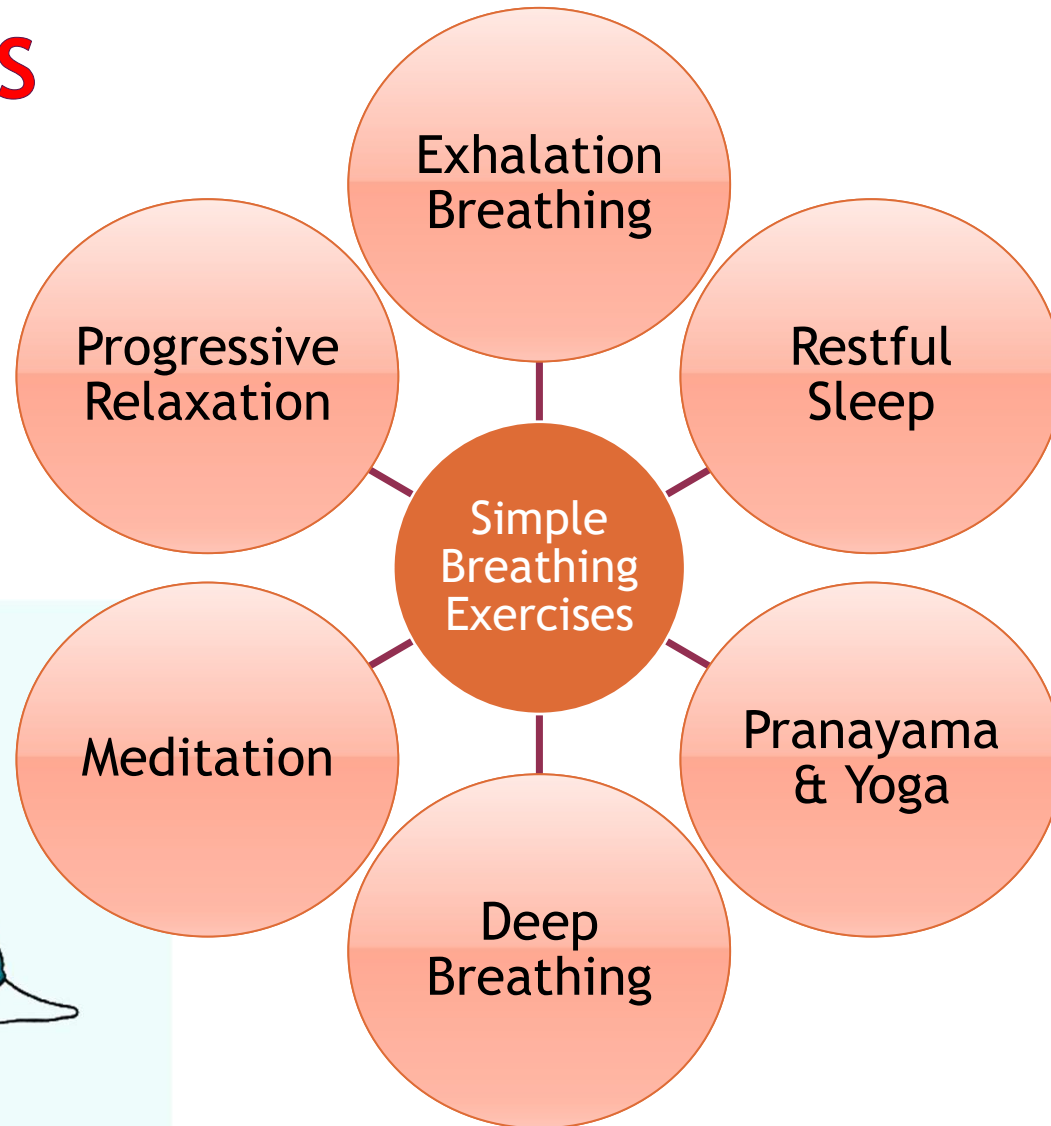




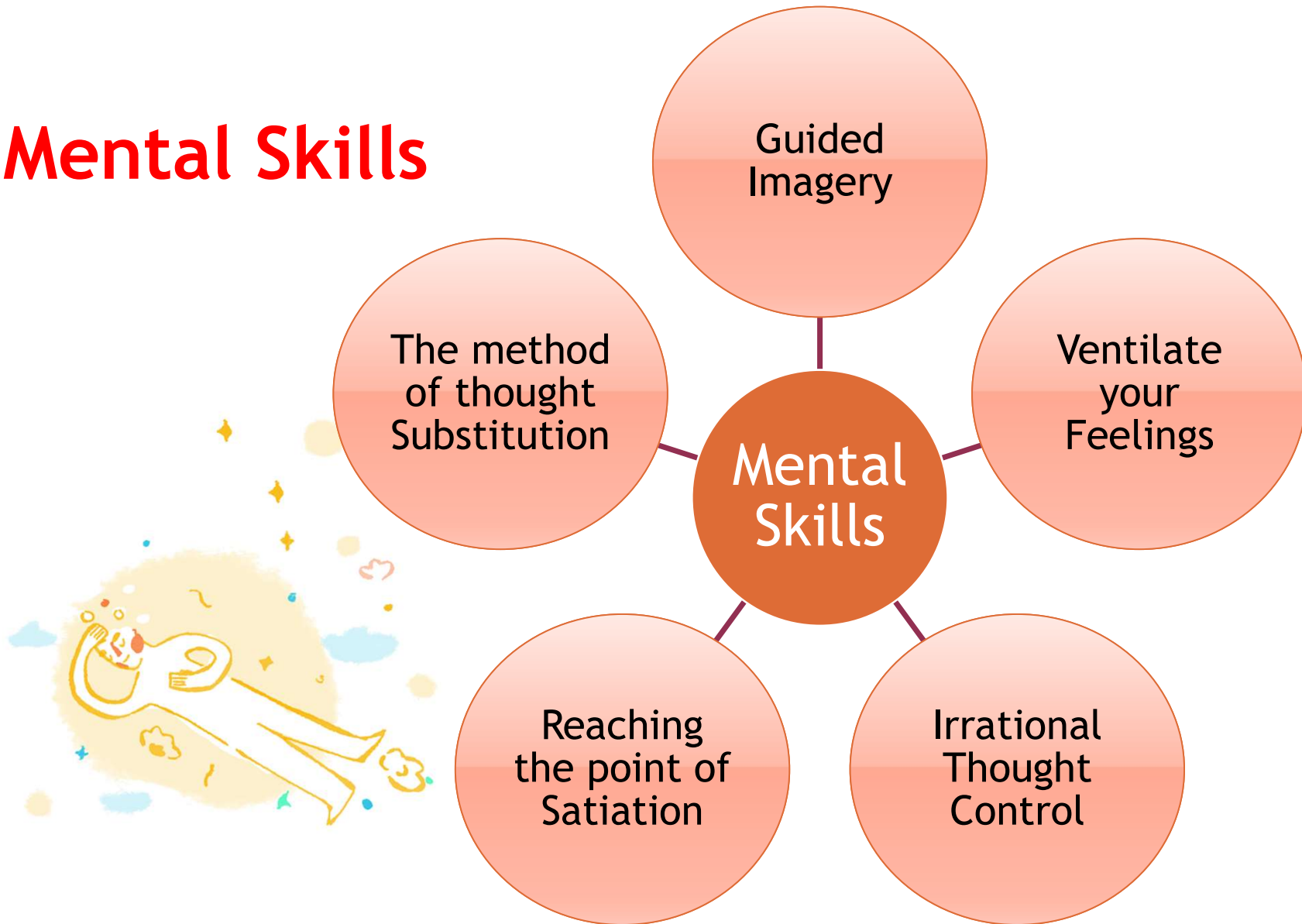
STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

- 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.

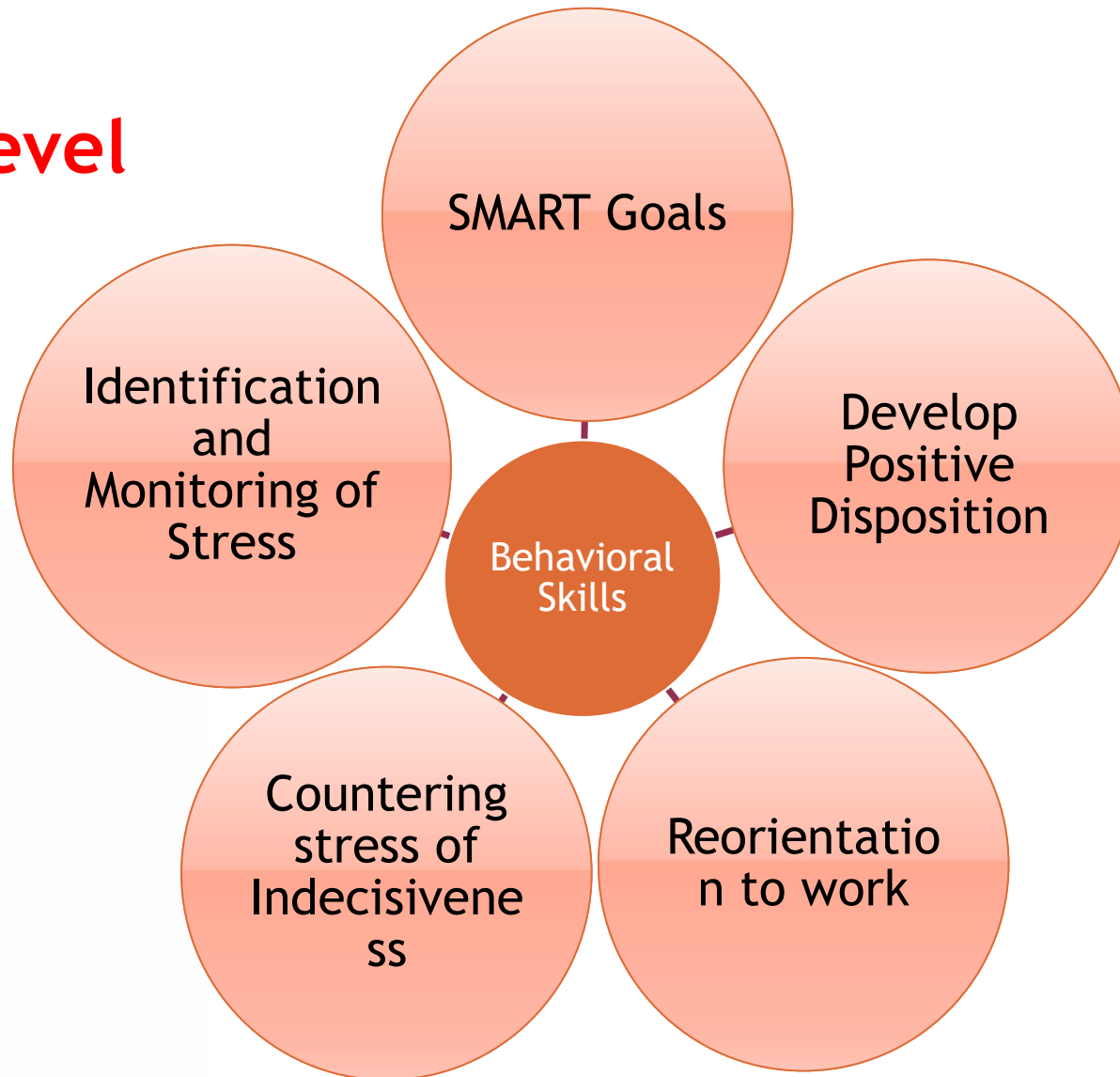
PHYSICAL SKILLS



Mental Skills



Behavioral Level

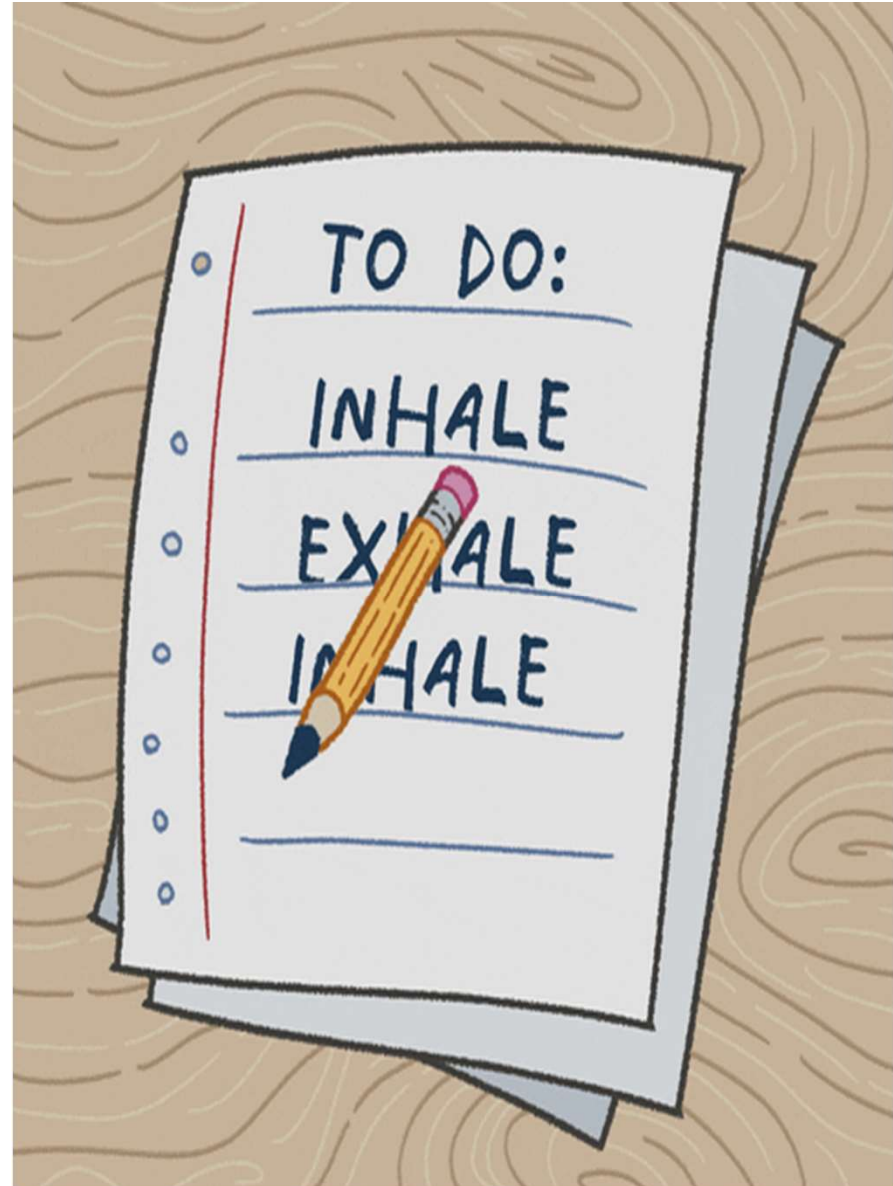


DEEP BREATHING

- ⦿ This can be done anywhere and anytime.

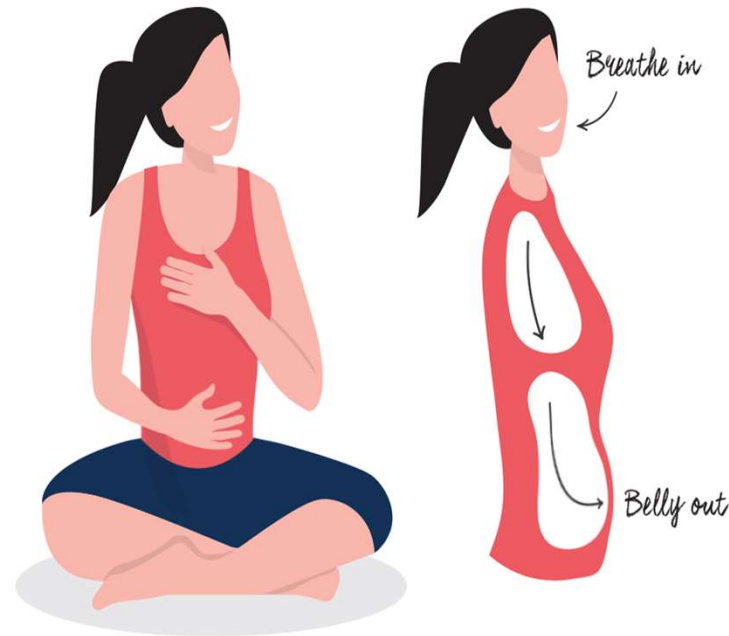
If you feel overworked in the office,
while watching television,
travelling in a bus or train,
waiting for your turn at a counter.

- ⦿ 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.



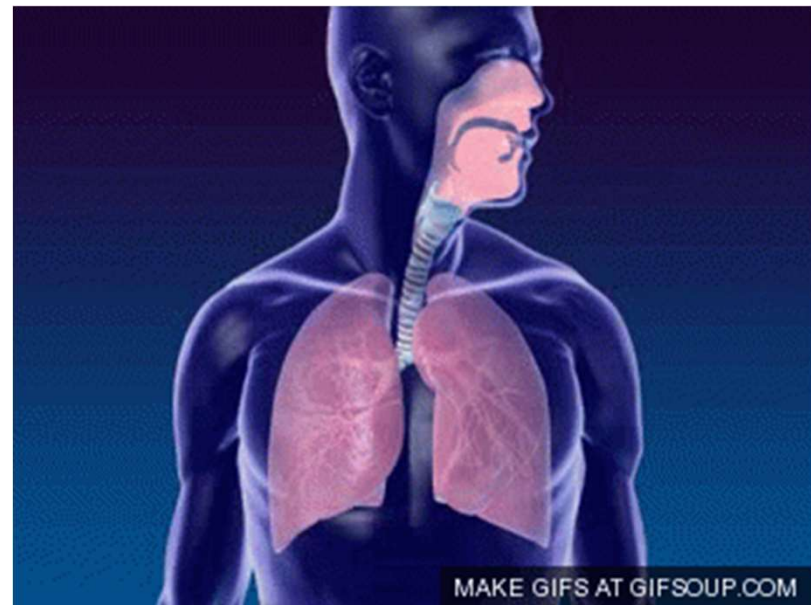
EXHALATION BREATHING

- ⦿ 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.



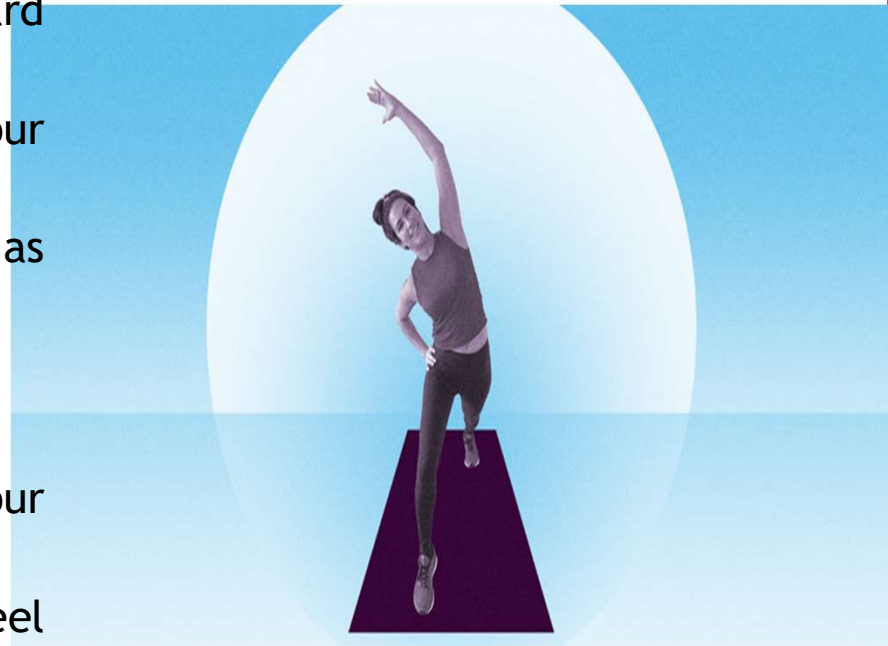
STRETCHING EXERCISE

- ◉ 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.

