

Relaxation Techniques

Let's face it, we live in a stress filled world, and even if we're not feeling stressed ourselves, it's all around us. At some time or another, we will succumb to it, and before it gets the best of us, we need to learn how to handle it. Stress can have many negative effects on the body, leaving us susceptible to all kinds of ailments and chronic disease, some deadly. Take panic or anxiety disorder for instance. One of the contributors to this common condition is excessive amounts of the hormone cortisol, produced by the body during a "fight or flight" mode, when you react strongly to a situation, either physically or emotionally. If this happens too often, the body thinks it is always in danger, keeping cortisol levels high, which leads to the emergence of symptoms like shortness of breath, palpitations, high blood pressure, dizziness, chest pain, and a great feeling of fear or impending doom. This isn't a pleasant experience, just ask anyone who has had a panic attack.

When stress becomes overwhelming, there are quick relaxation techniques you can do almost anywhere to make you feel better almost immediately. Lie on your back or sit comfortable where you are. Tighten all the muscles in your toes, then flex your feet, and slowly move up through your body to your face and neck, holding each stretch for ten seconds. Deep breathing is another relaxation technique that will slow your heart rate, lower blood pressure, and clear your mind. Begin by lying on your back or get into a comfortable position. Inhale slowly through your nose filling the lungs completely over a period of eight to ten seconds. Hold it, and then slowly release your breath through pursed lips, taking two to three times as long to exhale as to inhale. Guided imagery can be done alone or combined with breathing relaxation techniques. Again, lie on your back or get comfortable with your eyes closed. Imagine a peaceful setting at your favorite vacation destination. Put yourself there, feel the warmth of the sun on your cheeks, the breeze blowing through your hair. See how relaxed you are?

There are many other simple relaxation techniques that are helpful tools for coping with stress and promoting long term health. Learn how to relax and find peace by practicing yoga regularly or meditate daily. Indulging in relaxing spa treatments is also another option, which works well with other techniques, like biofeedback and listening to relaxation tapes. Whatever works for you, do more of it. Pamper yourself and don't get caught up in toxic situations. Your body will thank you for it.