

# 14

# STRESS

# BUSTERS

## 1 DEEP BREATHS

- Close your eyes if you want to, and take 5 slow, deep breaths.
- You can also imagine that you are at the top of some steps. Take one slow, deep breath and picture yourself taking one step down. Then take another slow, deep breath and picture going down the second step. Continue with the breaths and with going down the steps a few more times, until you are more relaxed.

## 2 ALL TOGETHER NOW

Be prepared for school, practice, and other activities ahead of time, to help make your day less stressful. Gather your homework and other things for school together before you go to bed. Put your shoes, backpack, and jacket together so they are ready to go.

## 3 TENSION-MELTERS

- Find the spot on your body where you feel the most tension - perhaps your neck, shoulder muscles, or jaw. Then close your eyes if you want, concentrate on that spot, tensing it up for 3-4 seconds, and then let it go. While doing this, imagine the stress slowly melting away.
- Or, practice shoulder rolls if you hold tension in your neck or shoulders - raise shoulders up to your ears, then backwards, down, and forward, making a circle. This will loosen up those muscles.
- Or, gently massage your forehead, jaw, or top of the head to help relieve tension headaches.

## 4 SNOOZE IT OR LOSE IT

Dealing with stress uses up a lot of energy, so you may feel tired or cranky much of the time. Problems may then seem much tougher than they really are, and it becomes easy to "lose it" when we're wiped out. Be sure to get enough sleep each night, so your body and mind can re-charge and will continue developing toward adulthood.

## 5 MOTION SENSORS

Ride a bike, dance around the room, shoot some hoops, walk or jog around the neighborhood to help relieve stress. Physical activity clears your head and lifts your spirits by increasing endorphin levels, which are natural chemicals in the body that make you feel good.

## 6 POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Say positive statements inside your head to help stay calm and handle the stress. Use phrases like:

- "Stop and slow down my thinking."
- "I can do this."
- "This won't last forever."
- "Stay calm and breathe slowly."
- "I can handle this."
- "Chill out, calm down."



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## 7 REFILLS

Eating breakfast will give you energy needed to start your day. Throughout the day, refill with fruits, vegetables, protein (peanut butter, a chicken sandwich, tuna salad, nuts, or string cheese) and grains (wheat bread, crackers, or a granola bar). Be cautious of sodas and sugary snacks; the energy from these only lasts a short time, and then can leave you sluggish and tired.

## 8 LAUGH-AEROBICS

Did you know that it takes 15 facial muscles to laugh? Laughing can make you feel good -and that can last for a long time. So, laugh more often by watching a funny movie or cartoons, reading a joke book, or chatting with your friends.

## 9 FRIENDLY FUN

Get a friend or a group together to play ball, go to the movies, or play a board game - or just hang out and talk. Friends can help you work through your problems and find some solutions you may not have thought about.

## 10 CALM PLACEMENTS

- Think of a real place you've been, where you feel peaceful. For instance: the beach, your bedroom, grandpa's backyard, a tree house. When stress kicks in, close your eyes, imagine that spot, while breathing slowly.
- If you cannot think of a peaceful place, create your own special place in your mind. Would you like to visit a quiet mountain stream, or go for a walk in the woods in your mind, or a quiet corner of the library?

## 11 JOURNAL WRITING

Write down anything you want to get off your chest – things that make you angry, things that make you happy or hopeful, things that confuse you. This is a good place to sort out your feelings in private, in a secret notebook or journal.

## 12 ROUTINELY DESIGNED

Set up some routines, habits, to help make your life simpler, and to help your body deal with all of your stresses better. Before bed, you might want to choose your clothes for the next day and have them ready to go. Maybe you enjoy listening to music, writing in a journal, or reading before bed each night. Doing 10 jumping jacks every morning and eating breakfast can help set your brain to “wake up” mode.

## 13 CONNECTIONS

Talk to someone about what's bothering you, instead of keeping your feelings bottled up inside. It might be a friend, a family member, a church person, a teacher or school counselor - someone you trust and respect.

## 14 CHILL TIME

Think of activities that help you relax. Perhaps listening to music, day dreaming, taking a hot bath, watching TV, taking a short nap, reading a comic book or other book, cooking, playing with your pets, drawing or painting, writing stories, working on a puzzle or a hobby, or working in a garden are some activities that you may enjoy.