

City of Boston



Employee Assistance Program *Your Resource for Solutions*

The Employee Assistance Program

Stress Management and Resiliency

The Employee Assistance Program



City of Boston
Employee Assistance Program
26 Court Street
Boston, MA 02108

Learn how the EAP can help you
Call: 617-635-2200

E.A.P. is a resource designed to assist all city of Boston employees and family members in ***identifying*** and ***resolving*** their personal problems / concerns by offering information, skills and resources

E.A.P.'s mission is to promote, establish and increase quality of life, good health and personal experiences. Our goal is to work in collaboration with employees and family members to restore and or initiate well-being in work and life.

What is Stress?

“**T**he non-specific response of the body to any demand for change”.

“**W**orkplace stress” The harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is a conflict between job demands on the employee and the amount of control an employee has over meeting these demands.

Stress in the workplace can have many origins or come from one single event. In general, the combination of high demands in a job and a low amount of control over the situation can lead to stress

- Headaches
- Sleep disturbances
- Difficulty concentrating
- Short temper
- Upset stomach
- Job dissatisfaction
- Low morale



Feeling Stressed?

Some stress is okay (sometimes referred to as "challenge" or "positive stress") but when stress occurs in amounts that you cannot handle, both mental and physical changes may occur.



Identifying stress in yourself can be difficult. There are usually a number of warning signs that help indicate when you are having trouble coping with stress before any signs become apparent. One clue is simply feeling rushed and pressured all the time

Activities that were pleasant can become a hassle, with time spent watching the clock and waiting for the "day" to be over. Instead of appreciating the moment, you might dwell on a never-ending, ever-expanding to-do list. You might be more impatient and lose your temper easily.

“Of all the reactions to trauma, resilience is the most common.”

-G. Bonanno, PhD, 2004

- **t**he process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress – such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors
- **r**esilience is “bouncing back from difficult experiences” and one of the **most common** human responses to trying situations
- **i**ndividuals and groups are inherently **very** resilient (although may not always *feel* that way)

Fostering Resiliency

Make connections

- ❖ Reach out to family, friends, and local community groups.

Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems

- ❖ You cannot change the event, but you can choose how to respond.

Accept that change is a part of living

- ❖ Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed help to clarify what can be changed.

Move toward your goals

- ❖ Create tangible goals. Do something regularly, however small it is.

Take decisive actions

- ❖ Act on adverse situations as much as you can.

Resilience



Fostering Resiliency

Look for opportunities for self-discovery

- ❖ View the experience as a learning opportunity to grow personally.

Nurture a positive view of yourself

- ❖ Improving confidence and trusting your gut help build resilience.

Keep things in perspective

- ❖ Avoid blowing the event out of proportion.

Maintain a hopeful outlook

- ❖ Visualize what you want vs. worrying about what you fear.

Take care of yourself

- ❖ Drink water, exercise, sleep, and enjoy a healthy diet.



Never Give Up

We must remember that stress is not a situation itself, but your response to that situation. We cannot eliminate stress from our lives, but we can minimize it. Recognizing and managing stress is important. There are many ways to be proactive in dealing with stress in the workplace



Laughter increases relaxation and is one of the easiest and best ways to reduce stress. The greater the intensity of the laughter, the larger the decrease in tension and the longer the effects last.

- Share a joke with a co-worker,
- Watch a funny movie at home with some friends,
- Read the comics,
- Think back on humorous situations in your past
- or in the past of someone you know, and try to see the humor in the situation.



Every



Laugh



Matters

Learn to relax, take several deep breaths throughout the day, or have regular stretch breaks. Stretching is simple enough to do anywhere and only takes a few seconds. Take your designated breaks, push yourself away from your desk during lunch and get some fresh air.

REMEMBER...TRY TO

The word "Relax" is written in a thick, blue, cursive font. A cartoon mouse is perched on top of the letter 'R', and another cartoon mouse is curled up inside the letter 'x'.

Relax

Take Charge

You can take charge of your situation by taking **10 minutes** at the beginning of each day to prioritize and organize your day.



Be honest with your colleagues, but be constructive and make practical suggestions. Most importantly, be realistic about what you can change and remind yourself that you will do the best you can.

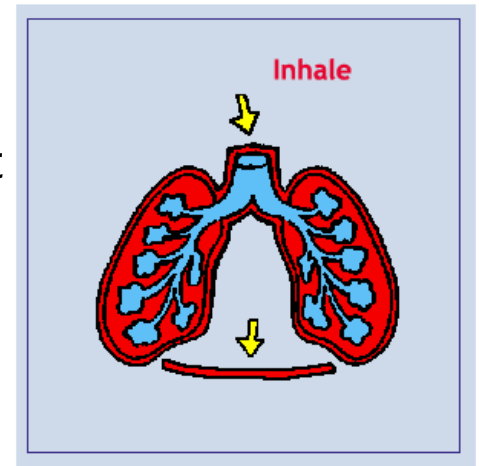
Diaphragmatic Breathing

Relaxation Breathing Exercises For The Stress Reaction



This is the most natural method of breathing. The name comes from the Diaphragm, which is the main muscle of breathing. It is a large dome shape muscle, which fills the base of the thorax (your chest cavity).

As you inhale, the diaphragm moves down and pushes out slightly. This allows the lungs to extend and fill with air. After a second or two, when the body has processed the inhaled air, the diaphragm pushes back up and compresses the air the out of the lungs in exhalation.

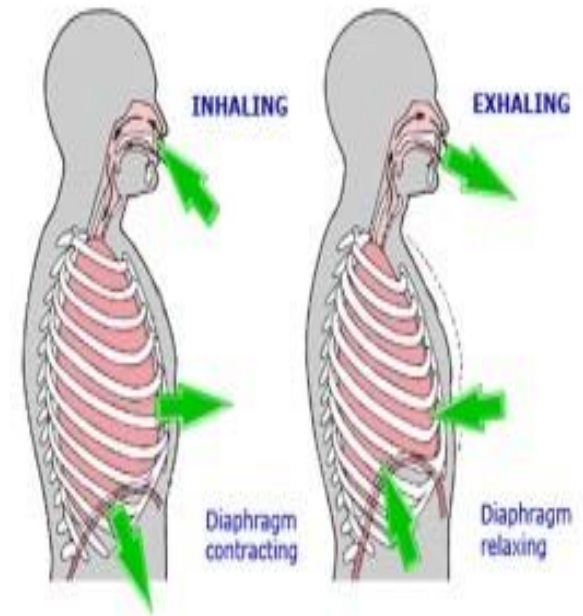


This process continues throughout life. When you breathe *IN*, the diaphragm goes *OUT*. When you breathe the diaphragm goes *IN*.

Diaphragmatic Breathing Exercise

Step by Step

- Sit or stand comfortably.
- Use your fingertips to push in lightly on your diaphragm.
- Feel the movement as you breathe.
- Inhale slowly through your nose or mouth.
- Feel the diaphragm push out.
- Hold this inhalation for 3 seconds
- As you exhale, count to 20 by saying, “one by one, two by two, three by three,” etc., until you reach 20.
- Stop whenever you are when exhalation becomes a strain.



If you do not reach 20 on one breath, repeat this exercise 10 times. Do this three times daily until you reach 20 comfortably

Muscle Relaxation

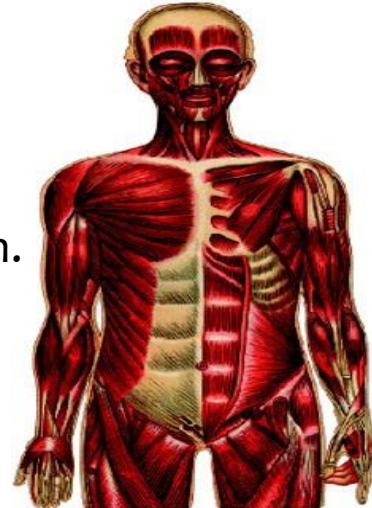
You can learn to relax all large muscle groups in your body. The method requires that you tense (tighten up and hold the tension) and relax the muscles. Each time you do this, concentrate on the difference in body sensation and feelings between the tension and relaxation. Learning these feelings will help you become aware of any tense muscles, which you can relax.

Introduction: Tense and relax each muscle, one at a time, as follows, with eyes closed, tighten the muscles just enough to notice the tension. Hold the tension for seven seconds.

Think the “relax command” that you selected. (I.e. Peace, Relax, Calm, Quiet).

Then release the tension from the muscle, relaxing it as much as you can. Concentrate on the sensation of relaxation for ten or more seconds.

**Tense up... then relax
One muscle at a time.**



Mini Relaxation Exercises

For muscle tension

TENSE JAW: Slowly move your jaw up and down, sideways and in circles. Softly massage along your jawbones. Say the vowels, exaggerating the movement of your lips: A-E-I-O-U



STIFF NECK: Close your eyes and slowly bend your chin to your chest. Then roll your head slowly towards your right shoulders, then to the back and around to your left shoulder. Do five circles in each direction. (Do not hold your jaw tightly closed; let it fall limp as you do this exercise).

STIFF SHOULDERS: Slowly stretch your shoulder blade up, then to the back, then down, then forward. Repeat ten times.
Then do swimming strokes ---- the crawl and the breast stroke----until you feel relaxed.



LOWER BACK PAIN: Stretch hands above your head, reaching towards the ceiling. Hold ten seconds. Bend knees, lean forward and reach your toes. Hold ten seconds. This can also be done sitting down

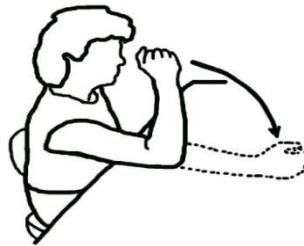
TENSE-RELEASE: This method requires that you tense (tighten up and hold tension) then relax any large muscle group in your body (i.e. thighs, calves, shins, forearms, shoulders, etc.). Become aware of any parts of your body that feels tense. Increase the tension in that part of your body and hold it tightly for a few seconds. Then relax the muscle and release the tension. Concentrate on the difference in body sensations and feelings between the tension and relaxation.

Deep Muscle Relaxation

Arms and Hands

Hand and fore arm: Make a fist

Biceps: Bend the arm at the elbow



Face and Throat

Face: Squint eyes, wrinkle nose and pull your whole face into a point at the center

Forehead: Knit or raise eyebrows

Eyes: Close tightly



Mouth: Bring lips together into tight point. Then press mouth in to teeth. Blow out gently to relax

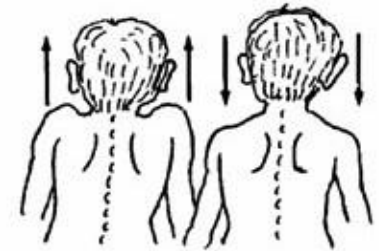
Tongue: With teeth slightly apart, press lips together and push tongue into top of mouth.

Chin: With arms crossed over chest, stick out your chin and turn it slowly as far as it will go to the left. Repeat for right side

Neck: Push your chin into your chest, at the same time as pushing your head backwards into the back of your chair to create a counterforce

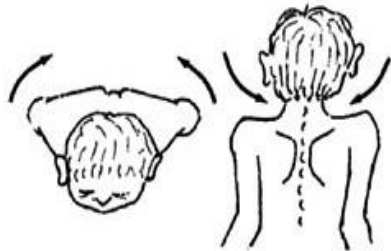
Upper Body

Shoulders: Attempt to touch your ears with your shoulders



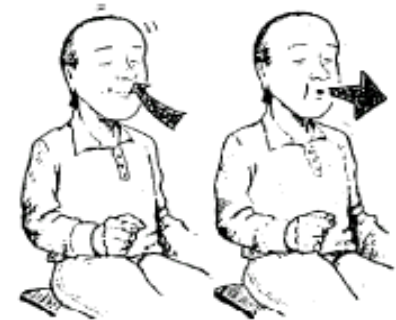
Pull shoulders up toward ears. Push shoulders down.

Upper back: Push shoulder blades together and stick out chest



Pulling shoulders back, pushes the shoulder blades close together.

Chest: Take a deep breath, hold it exhale slowly



Lower Body

Buttocks: Tighten buttocks and push into chair

Thighs: Straighten leg and tighten thigh muscles

Calves: Point toes toward your head

Toes: Curl toes



Relaxation Exercise

RELAXATION ROUTINE

1. SIT ON A CHAIR...



2. "SCRUNCH" UP YOUR FACE...



THEN... RELAX IT...



3. TENSE YOUR ARMS...



THEN... RELAX THEM



4. TENSE UP YOUR SHOULDERS AND CHEST...



THEN... RELAX THEM



5. TENSE UP YOUR LEGS...



...THEN RELAX!



6. BREATHE IN RELAXATION...



...BREATHE OUT TENSION

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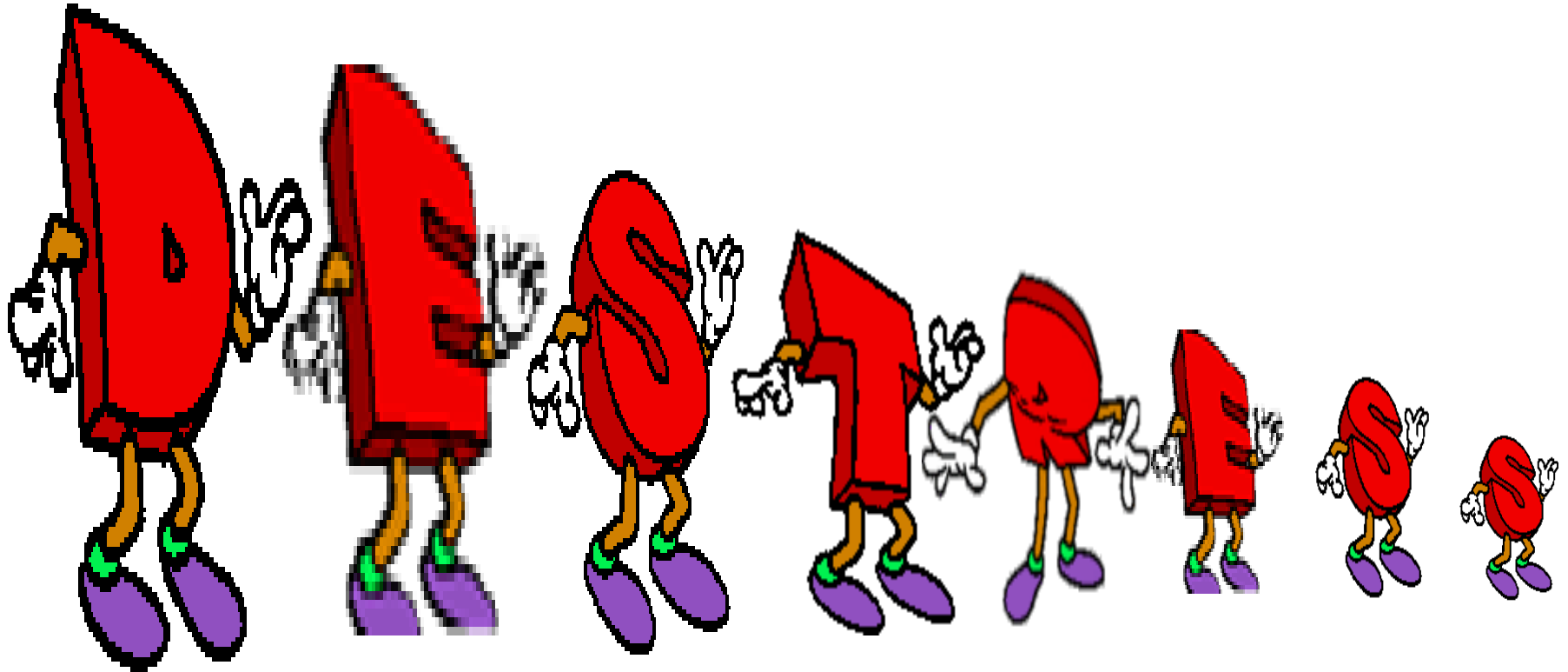
Feel free to print these tips and exercises and post them at home or work station so that you will remember them when your feeling stressed!

Thank you for your time.
We hope you found this presentation helpful.

UNTIL NEXT TIME..... FOSTER RESILIENCE, RELAX

The Employee Assistance Program

AND REMEMBER TRY TO...



The Employee Assistance Program

Sources

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<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/relaxation-technique/art-20045368?pg=2>

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Loss, Trauma, and Human Resilience: George A. Bonanno; January 2004 • American Psychologist

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