



STRESSED??

Who isn't? Whether it's from family, work, bills, or a combination of all of these, stress has become the norm for the majority of adults. While some stress can actually be good for us, too much of a "good thing" can be detrimental to our health and well being.

The good news is stress and its effects are manageable. By implementing the following strategies you can help reverse your body's stress response and avoid the negative effects of chronic stress.

- **Breathing Exercises:** Stress relief breathing can be done anywhere & anytime. Breathe in through your nose while slowly counting to four, hold the breath for a count of four and slowly release the breath through your mouth for a count of four. Now wait another four seconds and start the breathing again. Do this exercise for a minimum of five times or for several minutes as a form of meditation.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation** is a technique that enables you to completely relax the muscles in your body quickly, thereby releasing tension. It takes some practice, but it can be done anyplace & anytime also.
 - Begin by tensing all the muscles in your face. Hold for a count of eight as you inhale. Now exhale completely and let your face go completely relaxed as though you were sleeping.
 - Next tense your neck & shoulders, inhale for a count of eight and exhale while relaxing these muscles.
 - Work your way down your body repeating this technique with each muscle group until you have finished with your feet. With practice



you can relax your entire body like “liquid relaxation” being poured over your head and flowing down your body.

- A quick burst of exercise is another great stress reliever. It is great for your mind and body by increasing your oxygen intake, producing endorphins and providing a distraction for frustrations. Try a quick run up several flights of stairs, some jumping jacks or a few sets of push-ups.
- If all else fails, remember the saying “Laughter is the best medicine”. A good belly laugh reduces stress and increases endorphins...and it’s fun!

We can’t always control the amount of stress we have in our lives, but fortunately, there are ways we can control how stress affects our bodies.

