

# STAFF RESOURCES

## Easy Exercises to Relieve Stress in Your Life

What is stress? Stress is our response to daily life. The right amount of stress is a positive force. It helps us to do our best work and to keep us alert, energetic, focused and engaged in the world around us. On the other hand, too much stress can leave us tense, anxious and uncomfortable. Stress is responsible for 75-90 percent of doctor visits according to the American Institute for Stress.

You cannot avoid stress; it is part of daily life. Yet if high levels of unwanted stress are not properly managed, your health and sense of well-being may suffer. Simple, regular relaxation routines such as stretching and deep breathing can relieve stress. These exercises will help you deal with stress in the workplace as well as in other areas of your life.

### Breathe Deeply

- Deep breathing is one of the easiest and most natural (yet most overlooked) stress-relief methods. Take a deep breath in through your nose for a count of four, and then exhale through your mouth for a count of four. Repeat this exercise 20-30 times.

### Head and Neck Roll

- Relax your shoulders, and let your head roll forward chin-to-chest. Slowly rotate your head in a circle without straining your neck. Repeat five times. Relax. Then rotate in the opposite direction, and repeat five times.

### Arm Stretch

- Raise your arms above your head with your fingers interlaced and your palms facing up. Push up as far as you can. Hold for 10 seconds. Relax. Repeat five times.

### Ear to Shoulder

- Sit with your spine straight, your chin resting on your chest and both feet flat on the floor. Inhale deeply. As you exhale, slowly roll your left ear toward your left shoulder. Inhale deeply and exhale slowly, rolling your chin back to your chest. Inhale deeply and exhale slowly, rolling your right ear to your right shoulder. Inhale deeply and exhale slowly, rolling your chin back to your chest. Relax. Repeat five times.

### Back Stretch

- Lie on your back, keeping your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Gently push your lower back so it touches the floor. Hold for 10 seconds. Relax. Repeat five times.



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