

# How to Shift to Instant Calm

## Self-Help Tools to Shut Down Stress NOW!

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Keep these instructions handy to make it easy to help yourself when you need it. Track your progress with the chart on the last two pages.

# Self-Help Tools to Shut Down Stress NOW!

If you have a lot of stress, anxiety, panic and overwhelm, find it difficult to soothe yourself to feel calm and sleep well – you're not alone.

Millions of people all over the world regularly experience these negative, low energy states that create suffering now, and in the future.

Feeling stress is a natural human reaction to perceived threat and uncertainty. However, excessive stress disrupts every neural activity in your brain. It has a negative impact on your immune system and your ability to think creatively (problem-solve); it prevents healing and is a significant factor behind most doctor visits.

Experts estimate that chronic stress is partly responsible for most 'accidents' and serious diseases including heart disease, cancer, stroke and lower respiratory disease!

And your stress affects others around you. Like a virus, stress is highly contagious and spreads quickly in households and workplaces.

That's why it's vital to take control of yourself and your emotional state

quickly, knowing that panic or meltdowns **never** help and **always** make a situation worse.

Thankfully, it **is** possible to take charge of your stress symptoms quickly in a healthy way – no matter what's happening around you – without resorting to unhealthy coping methods like alcohol and drugs!

Ideally, you'll want to learn how to do this before the feeling escalates, because it's difficult to learn something when you're in distress.

The more you practice using breath and movements that you know lower stress, the more likely it is that you'll use them when you need them!

I suggest that you try **all** the following techniques that I've collected over the years. Some of them may seem overly simple or look 'funny', but ALL are effective and most are supported by the latest brain science research.

Choose one to three that feel right, resonate with you or look like you would use them when you need them. Keep in mind that different

situations may require different techniques.

You can decide how effective a technique is for you when you check in with yourself and assess how you feel before and after using a calming technique. The chart on the last two pages of this report will help you track your progress.

Learning these techniques and keeping the written instructions handy will give you the confidence to know that you can handle stress calmly when it comes up.

- **Breathwork** to calm or prevent stress, anxiety, panic attacks, anger, hyperventilation; to increase focus and to relax before sleep.
- **Movement** to relax and re-centre from stress, tension and anxiety and create long-term resilience (Repetitive activities, Yawning, Stretching and Stroking, Tapping, Calm Touch, Cranial Balance)

#### NOTES:

- Before using any technique, make sure that your intention is to be calm and peaceful.
- All postures work best when you're properly hydrated. If in doubt, drink a glass of water before you begin.
- Too many deep breaths can energize or agitate, so pace yourself! At any time, if you hyperventilate, hold your breath for a few seconds then deeply exhale.
- Before you begin, get into a comfortable position in your chair, on a yoga mat or bed.
- An Inhale and an exhale are considered one breath.
- Remember to relax your tongue on the floor of your mouth
- Using these techniques can alleviate and control your stress symptoms. However, if you find that your symptoms persist, you may want to heal the underlying root cause of your triggers and symptoms by doing inner work with a coach or therapist when the time is right.

# BREATHWORK

Stress causes your body to tense up and breathe shallowly. We are a society of shallow breathers – and unresolved stress is the reason. Breathing to melt stress counterbalances your body's stress response.

There are two types of intentional breathing that are most effective when used together to reduce physical and emotional stress:

**1. Abdominal breathing** – when you send your breath into your abdomen, it **stretches and relaxes your diaphragm, the muscle most affected by stress**. As your diaphragm relaxes, it sends an **“All is well” message to the amygdala in your brain**, which becomes a signal for your whole body to release tension and relax.

**2. Mindful breathing is slow, regulated conscious breathing. Use your breath with the intention to allow your body to relax.**

You can enhance the effects by imagining positive energy (love) flowing in when you inhale, and negative energy (fear) leaving when you exhale. Or, you could picture an ocean rising on the inhale, and falling on the exhale.

When you **combine the two together into mindful abdominal breathing** you create one of the most powerful stress-reduction techniques ever devised. It's as effective as Valium and a whole lot faster – and safer!

# 1. General Abdominal Breathing

Use this simple mindful breathing technique anytime...

1. Put one hand on your chest, and one on your abdomen (just above your navel).
2. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose.
3. Direct your breath downward into your belly, so it pushes up the hand resting on your abdomen. The hand on your chest shouldn't move much at all.
4. Exhale through your mouth making a quiet whooshing sound.
5. Breathe only when you need to, to avoid hyperventilation.
6. Repeat this type of breathing for five or six breaths.

# 2. Simple Calming Breath

The next time you feel emotionally upset or angry...

1. Sit down in a quiet place.
2. Exhale.
3. Slowly and gently inhale through your nose to the count of three.
4. Slowly and gently exhale to the count of three.
5. Count 10 breaths. Usually after about 6 or 7 you'll lose count...and feel quite different.
  - Your pulse rate slows down
  - Your mind calms itself
  - Your awareness comes back into your body.

### 3. Panic Prevention

If you experience hyperventilation and panic when you get stressed, this exercise will stop that fast!

1. Breathe out deeply to exhale all the old air.
2. Close your mouth. **It's almost impossible to hyperventilate when breathing only through your nose.**
3. Breathe in slowly.
4. Put one hand over your abdomen, just above the navel.
5. Breathe in through your nose, slowly counting, "1...2...3."
6. Pause a second and then breathe out counting, "1...2...3...4".
7. **Keep practicing for at least three minutes.**

**Notice that the exhalation is one beat longer.** That's because you need to completely empty your lungs with each breath to prevent you from taking short, high panicky breaths.

After your breathing is calmer, slow your breathing even further. Breathe in and count "one...two...three...four". Pause a moment and breathe out, "one...two...three...four...five."

- Matthew McKay and Patrick Fanning

## 4. 4-7-8 Breath

The 4-7-8 breath is perfect for relaxation, to help get ready for sleep, and to calm racing thoughts.

Get into the habit of taking four of these breaths, several times a day. Eventually, aim for eight breaths.

The benefits associate with this type of breathwork grow over time!

1. Give yourself permission to relax.
2. Exhale completely.
3. Place your tongue on the roof of your mouth near your teeth.
4. Breathe in through your nose as you slowly count to four.
5. Hold your breath and slowly count to seven.
6. Breathe out and slowly count to eight – purse your lips and make a whooshing sound as you blow out, keeping your tongue on the roof of your mouth!

– Dr. Andrew Weil

## 5. I'm Safe Breath

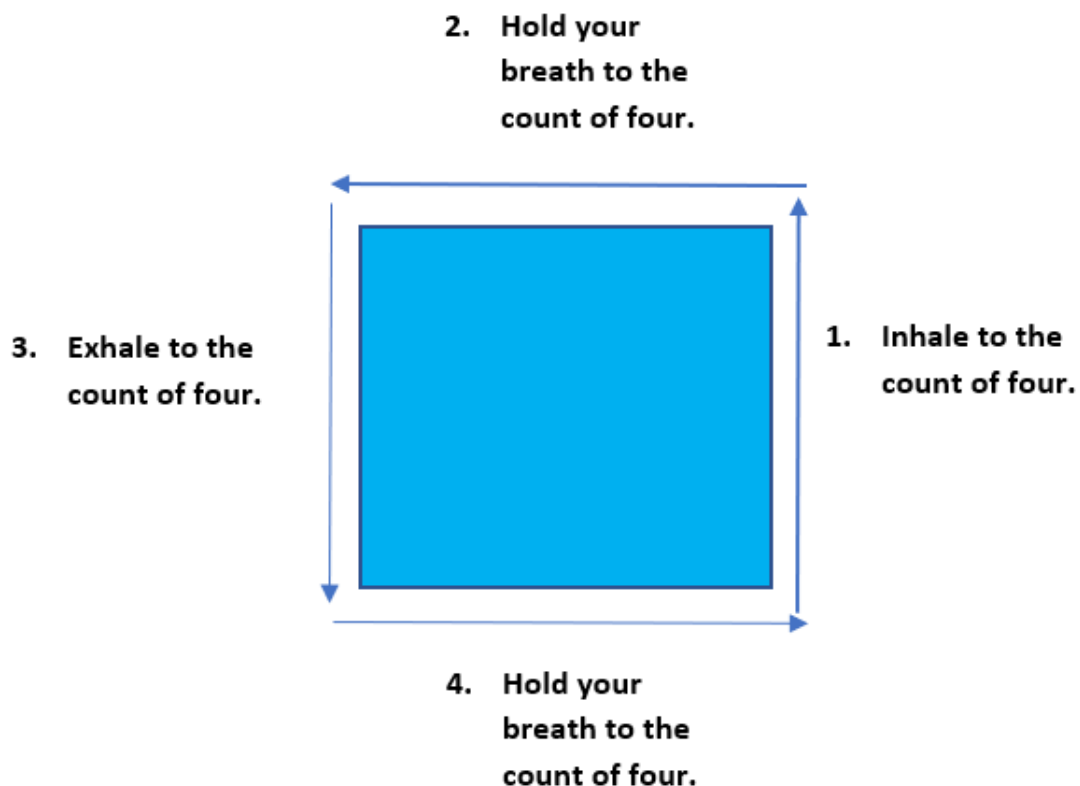
1. Put your hand on your heart. Be present to yourself.
2. As you slowly inhale through your nose; visualize the breath coming through your physical heart.
3. Exhale through your heart by blowing through pursed lips like blowing out a candle to make your exhale last longer. Pull in your abdomen to squeeze out all the air. Exhaling this way helps lower blood pressure; it tells the body you're safe and helps balance the nervous system.
4. Keep your hand and attention on your heart and take another two slow mindful breaths. Pause and repeat, if necessary.

## 6. Square Breath

Square breathing is a light meditation that calms your mind and body and increases your ability to focus on your work. First responders use this breath to help themselves and people in emergency situations to stay calm. Breathe slowly and gently as you count to four.

NOTE: Another way to do this is to use your fingers on one hand to visually go up and down each finger as you slowly breathe to the count of four.

1. Close your eyes and visualize a large square. (see below.)
2. From the bottom right axis, inhale as you count and move your eyes to the top right axis.
3. Hold your breath as you count and move your eyes to the top left axis;
4. Count to four as you exhale down to the bottom left axis;
5. Count to four as you hold your breath over to the bottom right axis.
6. Repeat the sequence eight times. (approx. 2 minutes)





# MOVEMENTS

## 7. Yawning, Stroking and Stretching

Yawning is one of the fastest ways to prevent and lower stress and anxiety. It helps you concentrate and maintain a healthy brain! Brain experts recommend yawning as many times a day as possible! You'll keep your stress level low and keep yourself motivated and focused! Try using this technique just before you meditate to enhance the relaxation effects.

Yawning, stroking and stretching together release dopamine which helps you enter a deep state of relaxation in 60 seconds or less.

1. Exhale
2. Take a slow, mindful breath to the count of three
3. Exhale to the count of three
4. Yawn
5. Slowly stretch and gently stroke your arms and hands

During your workday, do one slow stretch and a couple of yawns every hour.

Need reminders? Use [www.awakeningbell.org](http://www.awakeningbell.org) or a phone app such as Mindbell.

— Mark Robert Waldman

## 8. Wrist Wrap

The wrist wrap is a neuroemotional technique that calms your nervous system. It will relax and center you at any time – especially if you're lying in bed unable to sleep. Teach it to your kids to help them how to manage their stress and unwind from their day.

1. Have your right palm face up. Wrap the fingers of your left hand around your wrist.
2. Place the palm of your right hand on your forehead and leave it there for five minutes.
3. Repeat with the other side.

You can enhance the relaxing effects of this exercise by practicing one of the breathing techniques from the previous pages.

- Dr. Joseph Mercola

## 9. Repetitive Activities

Studies show that simple repetition lowers blood pressure and slows heart rate and breathing.

Doing almost any routine repetitive activity works. This could include housework such as chopping vegetables, washing dishes, vacuuming, sweeping, sewing, knitting), or sitting and reciting a word that represents how you want to feel such as 'calm' or 'peaceful'.

## 10. Tapping for Centering and Balancing

Tap on the following acupressure points to feel present in your body, centered, calm and balanced.

To prevent stress and overwhelm, and stay relaxed, consider developing the habit of tapping on these points when you wake up in the morning.

Sit tall with your feet on the ground. Feel your connection to the earth. Tap gently for one to three slow breaths. Take a break and repeat, if necessary.

1. **Under Eye:** This is the most important point for easing fear, anxiety, worry and mental confusion. Use when you're too much in your head, perhaps feeling self pity, a rigid attitude or obsessing. Tap with the first two fingers of both hands in an alternate rhythm on the bone under the eyes.
2. **Collarbone or Heart Chakra:** This is the second most important point for fears and phobias. It's the perfect tapping point to use when you want to calm any intense emotion. Also helps combat drowsiness and enhances clear thinking. Tap with the fingers of both hands in an alternate rhythm on both sides of your collarbone to integrate the right and left brain.
3. **Top of Head:** It's helpful to end a tapping session here since many energy meridian lines cross on top of your head, Tapping here gets you into your body, is energizing and allows easier access to Source energy.

**Find a partner for the next two techniques**

## **11. Cranial Balance Technique**

The Cranial Balance Technique helps with...

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Feeling of Being Overwhelmed
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Lack of Focus
- Poor Sleep Patterns
- Clarity
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Migraines
- Brain Injuries
- Neck and Shoulder Tension
- Fatigue
- Carpal Tunnel
- Low Back Pain
- Eye Strain
- Hormone Imbalance
- Post-Op Recovery
- Athletic Enhancement
- Artistic Creativity

### ***Directions:***

1. Sit in a comfortable position.
2. Ask your partner to place their thumb and middle finger in the two slight indentations that are about two inches to the right and left of the middle of the base of your skull.
3. Gently use your neck muscles to press into your partner's fingers. You are in charge of the pressure.
4. Hold this pose for up to 2 minutes. Release when ready. (If you get dizzy – drink water – you're dehydrated.)
5. Stand up and slowly walk 10 steps and notice that you are in a calmer, more relaxed state – physically and emotionally.

– Mike Menkes

## **12. Calm Touch**

Calm touch is soothing for the heart and breath!

Ask your partner to place the palm of their hand between your shoulder blades, (behind the heart chakra, at the point of the thoracic vertebra #4).

Leave it there for several minutes.

Notice how much calmer you feel!

# More Ways to Take Charge of Your Stress During Difficult Times

- **Stay hopeful and positive.** Decide to believe that this too shall pass – the world has recovered from every crisis it's ever had, and so have you. Plagues and disasters end. People recover from so-called fatal diseases.
- **Stay Calm** – Keep your brain working to be able to problem-solve and discern what's true and what's false. Trust your intuition, not your fear.
- **Accept what is** – Give up trying to control or change the impossible – that includes your spouse, children, the government. Accept what is happening. Just let it be. Watch it and notice it. Be curious about it. Observe it without judgement. That alone will reduce your stress! You cannot do anything to make a pandemic go away. But, you can do something about how it affects your mind and body.
- **Avoid worry** about what may happen. It's wasted energy. Focus on what you want.
- **Boost your immune system** – Your own immune system is the only thing that has ever kept you healthy. Give it what it needs and trust it to keep you strong and healthy.
  - Eat more fresh vegetables and fruit.
  - Take supplements including vitamin C which has been known to reduce the risk of dying from viral pneumonia since the 1940s
  - Vitamin D
  - Zinc
  - Magnesium



- B-Complex vitamins
  - Melatonin (1 to 2 mg)
  - Eat natural whole foods and herbs that are calming such as oatmeal, chamomile, ginger tea, fresh fruit and green vegetables, carrots, nuts and wild blueberries.
  - Drink more water.
  - Avoid sugar and processed vegetable oils.
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- Exercise every day, or just MOVE.** Run in place as fast as you can. You'll hit a point at about 30 seconds where you can't think of anything that makes you stressed or anxious, plus it'll bring fresh oxygenated blood to your brain!
  - Go outside** or throw open a window to feel the sunshine on your face
  - Meditate** – Close your eyes and do a mini meditation: “Let it be, let it go”
  - Slow down**
  - Breathe deeply or yawn every few minutes** to get oxygen to your brain
  - Avoid watching the news** and reading negative social media posts
  - Turn off the TV** and read uplifting, inspirational books instead
  - Nap** when you're tired. Listen to what your body needs
  - Contemplate your life** and what you want to achieve and experience
  - Journal your gratitude** – life happens for you, not to you. What benefits can you notice about your life now?
  - Develop a new morning routine** – read, yoga stretches, etc.
  - Enjoy a relaxing Epsom salts bath** – magnesium is absorbed through the skin
  - Notice when your stress symptoms are escalating** and do a calming breathing technique or movement

# Wendy Vineyard



Wendy Vineyard is a stress expert, natural health coach, consultant, writer, author and workshop leader.

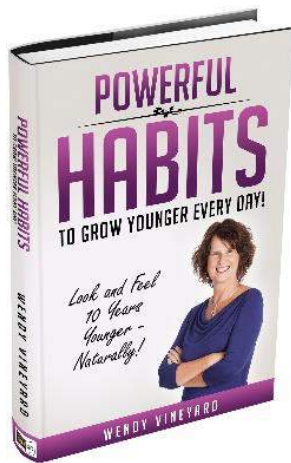
She empowers people to relieve their stress symptoms with simple self-help techniques that calm the bodymind within minutes.

She guides clients to heal the root cause of their stress and relationship issues, and she specializes in helping moms who feel hurt and rejected by their adult child so they can build a fulfilling relationship that lasts a lifetime.



Wendy worked for more than 20 years in corporate public relations until 2003 when she went back to school.

Over the next 15 years, she earned a college diploma and many certifications in holistic health and leading-edge neuroscience processes. She's a master coach and practitioner of Conscious Health Clearing, Advanced Clearing Energetics, Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP), Hypnotherapy, Emotional Freedom Techniques (Tapping) and others.



Wendy wrote a best-selling wellness book that's available on [www.Amazon.ca](http://www.Amazon.ca): "Powerful Habits to Grow Younger Every Day – Look and Feel 10 Years Younger Naturally!"

She's the author of "The Ultimate Guide" series of natural healing mini-books on stress, insomnia, relationships, menopause, memory problems and essential oils for women's health and wellness.

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# Stress Reduction: Track Your Progress

Before and after using your favorite anti-stress technique, assess your stress on the 1 to 10 scale (1 – very little stress; 10 – intense stress)

Date	What’s stressing you?	Before (1-10 Scale)	After (1-10 Scale)

