

STRESS BUSTERS

You can get more out of your massage if you participate in managing your stress in between sessions. Here are some things to try.

- Set aside time to talk to your family and friends about your concerns.
- Practice focused relaxation. Sit comfortably, noticing where you feel discomfort. Breathe slowly into these areas.
- Make a list of people and things you are grateful for.
- Set boundaries at work and home.
- Meditate. Take a class or try out a group.
- Bike, jog ... or just take a 10 minute walk!
- Dance! Take a ballroom dancing class or just twirl around your living room.
- Massage your aching neck or back.
- Stretch. Ask your massage therapist for some suggestions.
- Take a yoga or tai chi class.
- Have a cup of caffeine-free herbal tea.
- Practice deep, full body breathing if you can't sleep.
- If possible, take action to change situations that are troubling you.
- Relieve yourself of responsibilities that don't feel right any longer.
- Try new things, like a new, nutritious and tasty food.
- Assign yourself a time to "fret"—then move on to your day-to-day activities.
- If you feel that stress threatens to overwhelm you, seek a professional counselor.
- Take a hot bath. Add several drops of essential oils like lavender or ylang-ylang for relaxation.
- Try biofeedback.
- Take a painting, writing, or photography class.
- Play racquetball or tennis.
- Take a nap, even if it's only for ten minutes.
- Take your breaks at work. Get outside or do simple stretches for 10 minutes.
- Laugh. Watch comedies and read humorous books.
- Try autosuggestion. Frequently repeat a suggestion to yourself such as "Head tall" or "Neck relaxed." You don't have to *do* anything, just say the words.
- Take a warm shower, stretching your neck and shoulders slowly in the heat.
- Brush your hair. Brush from each temple to the base of skull, then down the center of your head.
- Take a weekend, or even a morning, away from obligations and worries.
- Express your creativity. Write down your memories or grow flowers.
- Try abdominal breathing. Inhale slowly through your nose. Exhale completely, squeezing the belly tight. Begin by practicing for 5 minutes at a time.
- Soak your feet. Add Epsom salts to a bath or basin of warm water and enjoy!
- Honor a time and space for your own relaxation. Regular massage is a great way to develop this nurturing habit.

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