

The Educator

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Stress and Anxiety

We live in such a fast-paced and competitive world where we all are faced with the daily pressures of school, work, and making ends meet. Adults and teens alike report they often feel stressed. Our youth are feeling the pressure of the expectations put upon them from family, school, and society in general. A survey done by the American Psychological Association in 2013 found that 13-17 year olds are experiencing unhealthy levels of stress. It was also reported that school is the top source of stress for teens, followed by the pressure of getting into a good college, or deciding what to do after high school. In response, many young people are prescribed medications to mitigate their symptoms.

While medication is without a doubt a valid, and for some a necessary, step in their journey leading towards equilibrium and balance it is not the only coping mechanism available. There are some great websites that gives tips and tricks to relaxation techniques available at any time to anyone.

- 4-7-8 Breathing explained here:
<http://gethealthyu.com/breathing-trick-that-can-instantly-calm-anxiety/> (<https://bored-inc.myshopify.com/products/digital-download-relaxing-breath-calming-poster>)
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health has a great article regarding Teen Stress:
[http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-adolescent-health/includes/pre-redesign/Teen Stress Standalone.pdf](http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-adolescent-health/includes/pre-redesign/Teen%20Stress%20Standalone.pdf)
- The Anxiety and Depression Association of America has a chart of coping mechanisms here:
<https://www.adaa.org/tips-manage-anxiety-and-stress>
- WebMD also has 10 Strategies for dealing with stress and anxiety here: <http://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/blissing-out-10-relaxation-techniques-reduce-stress-spot#1>



Look at them all, see what fits within life and use those strategies. Just remember there is no right and wrong answer so go ahead and try something new!

1) Meditate

It's simple. Sit up straight with both feet on the floor. Close your eyes. Focus your attention on reciting -- out loud or silently -- a positive mantra such as "I feel at peace" or "I love myself." Place one hand on your belly to sync the mantra with your breaths. Let any distracting thoughts float by like clouds.

2) Breathe Deeply

Breathe deeply & repeat.

Take a 5-minute break and focus on your breathing. Sit up straight, eyes closed, with a hand on your belly. Slowly inhale through your nose, feeling the breath start in your abdomen and work its way to the top of your head. Reverse the process as you exhale through your mouth.

3) Be Present

be.
here.
now.

Slow down. Notice how the air feels on your face when you're walking and how your feet feel hitting the ground. Enjoy the texture and taste of each bite of food.

4) Reach Out



5) Tune In to Your Body

Mentally scan your body to get a sense of how stress affects it each day. Lie on your back, or sit with your feet on the floor. Start at your toes and work your way up to your scalp, noticing how your body feels.

6) Decompress

Place a warm heat wrap around your neck and shoulders for 10 minutes. Close your eyes and relax your face, neck, upper chest, and back muscles. Remove the wrap, and use a tennis ball or foam roller to massage away tension.

7) Laugh Out Loud



8) Crank Up the Tunes

Research shows that listening to soothing music can lower blood pressure, heart rate, and anxiety. You also can blow off steam by rocking out to more upbeat tunes -- or singing at the top of your lungs!

9) Get Moving



All forms of exercise, including yoga and walking, can ease depression and anxiety by helping the brain release feel-good chemicals and by giving your body a chance to practice dealing with stress.

10) Be Grateful



Keep a gratitude journal or several (one by your bed, one in your purse, and one at work) to help you remember all the things that are good in your life.