

Stress Reduction

Small ways to steady yourself

When stress builds, begin with one manageable action. These practices may help you settle and choose your next step. Try them when things are calmer, too.

1 Breathe gently

Find a supported position. Let your shoulders relax. Breathe in gently through your nose and out through your mouth, if comfortable. Use an easy, unhurried rhythm; no breath hold is needed.

Your diaphragm moves as air enters your lungs, allowing your abdomen to rise gently. Air goes into your lungs, not your stomach. Avoid forcing a deep breath. If you feel dizzy or more distressed, stop and return to your usual breathing.

2 Notice where you are

Try naming 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, and 1 you taste. Use whichever senses are available and comfortable. You can also describe an object, feel your feet against the floor, or name objects of one color.

3 Release some tension

- Unclench your jaw and hands. Gently stretch or take a short walk.
- Try gently tightening and releasing one muscle group at a time. Skip painful or injured areas; simply relaxing them is enough.

4 Give your attention a resting place

- Listen to music, read, water a plant, play with a pet, or do a familiar task.
- Notice a worry without arguing with it. Return to what you can do now.
- If helpful, use a brief prayer or phrase such as 'One step at a time.'

5 Reach toward support

Connect with someone you trust. Ask for company or help with a practical need. If stress keeps interfering with sleep, relationships, work, or daily care, contact a health care professional. A chaplain can offer spiritual care and help you connect with support.

One thing I will try today

Sources NHS: Breathing Exercises for Stress | Guy's and St Thomas' NHS: Abdominal Breathing | NHS inform: Grounding Exercises | NIMH: I'm So Stressed Out!