



Ways to Reduce Stress

Jacksonville University Student Counseling Center

Stress affects every single one of us. When you experience distressing thoughts or worries, tension in your body, or difficulty concentrating, try to focus your mind on what is happening in the present moment. Use these stress management techniques to reduce feelings of anxiety, gain focus, and experience a greater sense of peace and centeredness within yourself.

1.

Practice deep breathing by tapping each of the numbers below in sequence as you breathe in through your nose, hold your breath, and breathe out slowly through your mouth. Repeat this sequence at least 10 times or until you feel calm.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inhale | 1 | - | 2 | - | 3 | - | 4 | | | | | | | | |
| Hold | 1 | - | 2 | - | 3 | - | 4 | - | 5 | - | 6 | | | | |
| Exhale | 1 | - | 2 | - | 3 | - | 4 | - | 5 | - | 6 | - | 7 | - | 8 |

2.

Using the Five Senses Exercise, purposefully take in the details of your surroundings using each of your senses. Slowly work down the list, and notice the small details that your mind would usually tune out.

5 things you can SEE – patterns, lights, movement, shapes, colors, faces

4 things you can HEAR – nature, voices, white noise, tapping, music

3 things you can TOUCH – textures, heat, clothing, weight, softness, objects

2 things you can SMELL – food, nature, beverages, air freshener

1 thing you can TASTE – food, beverages, mint, gum, candy, water

3.

Choose at least three of the categories below, and spend three minutes thinking of as many items as you can in each one.

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------|
| Movies | Countries | Books | Cereals |
| Sports Teams | Colors | Fruits & Vegetables | Vehicles |
| Animals | Stores | TV Shows | Famous People |

*For a variation, try naming items in a category alphabetically.
For example, for Fruits & Vegetables, "apple, banana, carrot," and so on.*