

## Stress Reducing Techniques

### 1. Slow Down Techniques

- 10-Second Breathing—In an acute situation, when your mind or body is racing out of control, slow down your breathing to a 10-second cycle, 6 breaths a minute. Find a clock or watch with a second hand and inhale for 5 seconds, then exhale for 5 seconds. Keep it up for 2-5 minutes, or until your pace slows down.
- 60-Second Break—Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Visualize yourself lounging on a sunny beach or watching the sunset or relaxing in the shower or sauna.
- 5-Minute Vacation—Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Then visualize a favorite place or activity. Let your imagination carry you away to a special spot that's refreshing and relaxing.
- Chest Massage—Relax your chest muscles and open up your breathing with a vigorous massage along the midline and across the chest below your collarbone.
- Bother List—Write down a list of all the worries, pressures, and concerns that are crowding your mind and clamoring for attention. Then burn the list or tuck it in your wallet for later attention.
- Peaceful Focus—Focus on something pleasant and beautiful in your immediate environment (a blade of grass, a painting, a color). Concentrate on the beauty you see and breathe in. Allow that beauty to slow you down.

### 2. Gear-Up Techniques

- Stretch and Move—Stand up and stretch. Arch your back and stretch your arms and fingers out to the side. Hold that posture for awhile and then let go. Now move your body all around to get the blood pumping. Clap your hands. Jump up and down. MOVE!
- Exhilaration Break—Imagine yourself somewhere exciting, exhilarating, or awe-inspiring (e.g., standing on a cliff above the ocean, performing for a large audience, cheering at an exciting football game, crossing the finish line at a race, laughing uproariously with friends, peering over the rim of the Grand Canyon, giving birth or watching birth). Let the vividness of that vision charge your batteries.
- Pep Talk—Give yourself a pep talk. Use your best persuasive powers to motivate, encourage, cajole, support, cheer, or challenge yourself. Ask somebody else to join in!
- Stirring Music—Turn on some lively music – whatever makes you want to get up and move. Dance. Bounce. March. Sing along. Get involved. Let the music pump you up and pull you along.
- Body Bracer—Gently pat or tap all over your body in an energizing rhythm. Keep it up until you tingle all over and are charged up.
- Exercise—Vigorous exercise of any kind is a sure-fire way to get geared up. Add a creative twist for some extra punch

### 3. Loosen Up Techniques

- Pretzel—Imagine that your body is all tied up in knots and only you know how to untie them. Beginning with your toes and gradually moving up the body, tense and relax each set of muscles. Visualize that you are tightening the knots as you tense the muscles and picture yourself undoing the knots as you relax the muscles and let go.
- Breathe Into Tension—Close your eyes and take a deep breath. As you become aware of any points of tension, "breathe into" that spot, allowing the breath to bring calm to the area and carry away tension as you exhale.
- Self-Massage—Reach across your body and massage the muscles of your neck and shoulder with long, firm strokes. Knead any especially tight areas with firm, circular or back and forth motions. Then repeat the process on the other side. With both hands, massage the base of your skull with firm, circular strokes. Continue over the scalp and face, stopping to give special attention wherever you notice tension. Don't forget the jaw!
- Shake A Leg—Stand up and shake an arm, leg, the other arm, the other leg, your whole body. Then take a deep breath and let yourself go limp all over.



**Meaford Military Family Resource Centre**

519-538-1371 ex 6509

Jennifer Haskell (Coordinator) Ext 6519