

1. **Breathing.** Consciously take several deep breaths.
2. **Relaxation by body parts.** Close your eyes, take several deep breaths, and silently tell yourself, "My feet and toes are relaxed." Notice that they are relaxed. Repeat process with calves, knees, thighs, etc., until you have worked through your entire body. Remember to include the head and facial parts. When finished, enjoy the sensation of complete absence of tension. Tell yourself, "I am completely relaxed, refreshed, confident," before resuming your activities.
3. **Progressive relaxation.** Use same process as for relaxation of body parts except tense each body part and hold for 15-20 seconds before releasing.
4. **Sense relaxation.** Eyes – 1. Rub palms of hands together until warm. Close eyes and place palms of hands over eyes. Press gently and feel the warmth of your hands seeping into your eyes. Breathe deeply and comfortably. Relax and repeat a few times. Eyes – 2. Close eyes and gently massage eyelids and eyeballs with fingertips. Small circular motions relax eyes most effectively. Ears. Place tips of index fingers in ear canal (not too deep) and vibrate the ears by slow back and forth motions of the fingertips. Do this for about 20 second intervals with 30-second rest periods in between.
5. **Imagery.** Imagine a pleasant, peaceful scene, perhaps a favorite place (a natural place works best). Concentrate on the details, colors, smells, and sounds. Continue with this imagery for a few minutes or as long as you like.
6. **Massage.** Great for relaxing! Self-massage of face, neck and hands is easy to do and is an instant stress reducer.
7. **Saunas/steam baths/hot baths/warm showers.** Are all common and easy methods of relaxation.
8. **Slowing down.** Slowing down an immediate activity (driving, working, bathing, etc.) is a simple way to reduce tension. We're often in too much of a hurry, which in itself can cause stress.
9. **Stopping.** Devote some time to yourself. Quit for ten minutes and just do nothing. Put everything aside, forget everything (if you can) and sit peacefully.
10. **Cutting back on activities.** People commonly stress themselves by doing too much or too many things at once, or taking on more than they can handle. Monitor your daily activities; determine which are unnecessary. Eliminate them or distribute them in a different way.
11. **Meditation.** Meditation and other forms of spiritual expression reduce stress.
12. **Yoga.** Yoga and similar disciplines combine physical, mental and spiritual principles to reduce tension and increase well being.
13. **Exercise.** Exercise your body: go jogging, walking, swimming, play tennis, ride a bike, join a soccer game. Make sure you get lots of exercise.
14. **Have fun.** Humor is a wonderful tension release. Develop your sense of humor. Laugh a lot!
15. **Maintain your support systems.** Keep in touch with family members, keep in touch with your friends; make new friends. Create a buddy system with your fellow students.
16. **Find a creative outlet.** Gardening, art, music, crafts, woodworking, cooking are just a few examples of outlets which are creative and stress reducing.
17. **Maintain or develop a healthy mind and body.** Make sure you get enough rest, adequate nutrition, and plenty of exercise. Take lots of breaks for rest and relaxation when you're in a high performance situation. Give yourself frequent changes of scene.
18. **Reinforce or develop your coping skills.** These include problem solving, relaxation, time management, the use of social supports, communication skills, and assertive skills. Seek out the "experts" in your environment who can share these skills with you.
19. **Think positively.** Fill your mind with uplifting images and banish negative thoughts.
20. **Give yourself credit** where credit is due and realize you can't do everything.

(Source: *Unstress Yourself: Strategies for Effective Stress Control* by Stuart B. Litvak. Ross-Erikson Publishers, Santa Barbara, 1980.)

SERVING PEOPLE IN CRAWFORD, GRAND TRAVERSE, LEELANAU, MISSAUKEE, ROSCOMMON AND WEXFORD COUNTIES.

105 Hall St., Ste. A
Traverse City, MI 49684
(231) 922-4850
(231) 935-3871 TDD/TDY

527 Cobbs St.
Cadillac, MI 49601
(231) 775-3463
(231) 876-3281 TDD/TDY

204 Meadows Dr.
Grayling, MI 49738
(989) 348-8522
(231) 876-3281 TDD/TDY

2715 Townline Rd.
Houghton Lake, MI 48629
(989) 366-8550
(231) 876-3281 TDD/TDY