

Ask an Expert – Eight Stress-Relieving Activities to Give You a Break

Emma Parkhurst

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Relaxing

Stress can be brought on by everyday hassles, but especially when there are larger issues like the ongoing public health concern of a pandemic. While no one's life is completely stress free, regular negative stress can keep us from feeling and performing our best; therefore, it is important that we learn how to manage it.

While it may seem like the coronavirus news is everywhere, one research-based technique shown to reduce stress, both short-and long-term, is simply to take a break. Taking in information about the pandemic repeatedly can be unsettling. But when you choose to step away, it gives you an opportunity to gain a new perspective or practice techniques to help you feel less stressed. Even just 20 minutes can be beneficial. Consider one of the following activities to help you destress.

1. Yoga – If you are new to yoga, now is the perfect time to take advantage of the many free online classes and reap the benefits of this stress-relieving activity at home.

2. Art – Before you say, “But I’m not an artist,” a recent study shows that engaging in a creative activity for 45 minutes significantly relieves stress in the body, regardless of experience or talent.

3. Exercise – Along with physical benefits, research continues to show exercise can have an immediate stress-relieving effect that can last for hours.

4. Go outside – Spending time outside in nature has been shown to relieve stress. If you can safely practice social distancing and are healthy, head outdoors.

5. Laugh – Many of us tend to hold stress in our face. Since our emotions and facial expressions are interconnected, laughing or smiling can relieve tension.

6. Socialize responsibly – Whether you're social distancing, self-isolated or quarantined, there are many ways to stay connected with friends and family. Check in with others over video chat, email, text or the old-fashioned ways – by talking on the phone or writing and mailing a letter.

7. Play or listen to music – Music can have an amazing effect on the body and mind. Faster music can make you feel more alert; upbeat music can make you feel more optimistic; slower music can quiet your mind.

8. Meditate – Meditation and mindfulness can help the mind and body relax, gain a new perspective and develop self-compassion. If you're new to meditation or mindfulness, consider starting with deep breaths. Even just one deep breath can relieve tension!

Sources:

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By: Emma Parkhurst, Utah State University Extension professional practice assistant professor, 435-919-1334, emma.parkhurst@usu.edu

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