

Quick Stress Break to Get Unstuck

Here is a quick way to help someone stop the spiral into a stress response. When a person feels the physical signs of stress coming on, do all three parts of this one break. It can be done seated, standing, or even lying down. The pattern can be easily learned and repeated. We know there is relaxation in repetition. Keep the breaths long and steady.

Part 1: Sit, stand, or lie down in a comfortable way. Perhaps let your eyes close.

- 1) Take a deep breath in and make tight fists. As you let the breath out, relax your hands and push out even more breath. Wait for your next breath.
- 2) As you take another deep breathe in, make tight fists. Breathe out, relax the hands.
- 3) Wait for the next breath to begin, and then make such tight fists you can feel the muscles in your arms tighten. Breathe out, relax the hands.
- 4) Wait for the next breath in and make tight fists. Breathe out, relax the hands.
- 5) Wait for the next breath in and make tight fists. Breathe out, relax the hands.

Part 2: Now put the hands together in front of you, with just the fingertips touching, like a steeple. Again, close your eyes if you like.

- 1) As you breathe in, press the fingertips together, firmly and evenly. As you breathe out, let go of the breath and the pressure on the fingertips. At the end of the breath out, your fingertips are just barely touching.
- 2) As you feel the next breath in, press the fingertips firmly together and feel the chest rise. Breathe out, releasing the press on the fingers to just a twinkling of a touch.
- 3) Wait for your next breath in and press, breathe out, and release the press as you keep pushing the breath out.
- 4) Inhale and press, exhale and release the press.
- 5) And again, inhale and press the fingertips firmly and evenly, and exhale, releasing that press. And release the hands to your lap.

Part 3: Take one hand and rest it on your heart or your belly. We are going to take 5 “Count to Calm” breaths.

- 1) Take a breath in and feel your hand lift, then breathe out and feel yourself begin to let go of what is bothering you. Press your thumb against your belly.
- 2) Take another easy breath in ... and take an easy breathe out. Press another finger down.
- 3) Feel the next slow inhale ... and then feel the slow breath out. And press another finger down gently.
- 4) Wait for the next long breath in, then feel your long breath out. And press another finger down.
- 5) Now feel the next breath in lifting your mood ... and then let go of the breath, but keep that good feeling! Then breathe out and press another finger.