

Different Methods of Coping with Stress

Relaxational Breathing

1. Belly Breathing
 - a. Breathe in slowly and deeply through the nose while exhaling through the mouth; during inhalation the stomach should expand and while exhaling the stomach should contract
2. 4 Count
 - a. Using only the nose, inhale for a count to four and exhale for a count of four
3. Diaphragmatic
 - a. Sit in a comfortable position and place one hand on your upper chest and the other just below your ribcage; breathe in through your nose so only your stomach moves – the chest should remain still

Meditation

- Find a quiet place and sit in a comfortable position
 - a. Important to sit with your back straight to help remain alert
- Focus on your natural breath pattern through your nose/nostrils
 - a. You can close your eyes, keep them open or anywhere in between; just become more aware of your natural breathing and the sensations associated with inhalation and exhalation
 - i. The purpose is to clear your mind of other distractions and focus on your breath pattern; don't be discouraged if your mind wanders – just nonjudgmentally bring your focus back to your breath
 - b. See how many breath cycles (one inhalation, one exhalation) you can follow

Guided Imagery

- YouTube: browse the options available there; you can pick a scene (beach, forest, etc.), time and facilitator
1. Sit in a comfortable position (similar to how you would sit in *Meditation*)
 2. Use *Diaphragmatic Breathing* while closing your eyes, breathing in peace and breathing out stress
 3. Once you are relaxed, go to your Happy Place, one that can help calm you when stressed
 4. While you are there, try to use all 5 senses
 - a. What does it look like?; smell like?; feel like?; what are you hearing?; any specific taste(s)?
 5. Stay as long as you like – it's YOUR Happy Place!

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

- YouTube: browse the different exercises there on PMR
- Find a comfortable position (seated or lying down) and attempt to clear your mind
- Tense and relax each of the following muscle groups for approximately 5 seconds:
 - a. Forehead → eyes and nose → lips, cheeks and jaw → hands → forearms → upper arms → shoulders → back → stomach → hips and buttocks → thighs → feet → toes
- Once you finish, scan your body for any muscle groups that are still be tense
 - a. Tighten and relax these specific areas three or four times



minute 1

BREATHE DEEPLY

Rest your hands on the tops of your thighs with your legs hip-distance apart and your feet flat on the floor. Close your eyes, or leave them open, allowing your gaze to rest, unfocused, a few feet in front of you. Taylor recommends meditating both ways (on different days or in a single session): shutting your eyes helps you focus on the inner workings of your body, while leaving them open strengthens your ability to stay serene amid external distractions. Observe how your feet feel on the floor; they may seem tingly, or you may sense the hardness of the wood against your toes. Now deepen your breathing (either through the nose, the mouth or both, whichever comes naturally), inhaling for a count of four and exhaling for a count of six.

minute 2

FIND YOUR NATURAL PACE

Stop counting and allow your breathing to fall into an easy rhythm. Pay attention to what your breaths feel like—not overly deep or shallow—and compare that with your usual cadence. (Most people tend to take short, weak breaths throughout the day, which deprives the blood of oxygen and, in turn, can lower energy levels.) Tune in to the rising and falling sensation in your body. You should experience it from your belly to your shoulders.

minute 3

STAY FOCUSED

Continue to be aware of your breathing. If random thoughts (shopping lists, work deadlines) pop into your head, don't push them out or linger on them. Instead, imagine each one as a harmless floating cloud. This visualization technique helps you acknowledge your worries without responding to them emotionally. If a thought still doesn't drift away from your mind, jot it down on the notepad. Then turn back to your meditation.

minute 4

RELAX

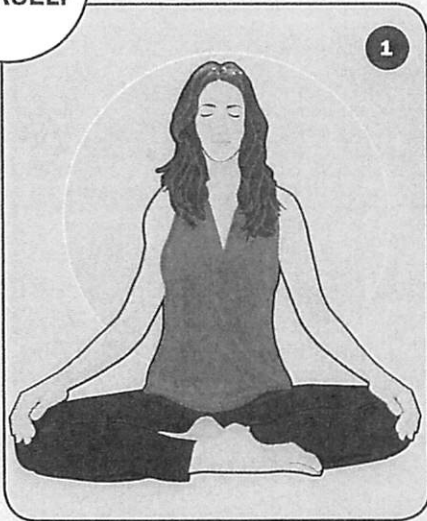
Release your focus on your breathing and simply sit. Remind yourself that there's nothing to do, fix or change.

minute 5

GIVE THANKS

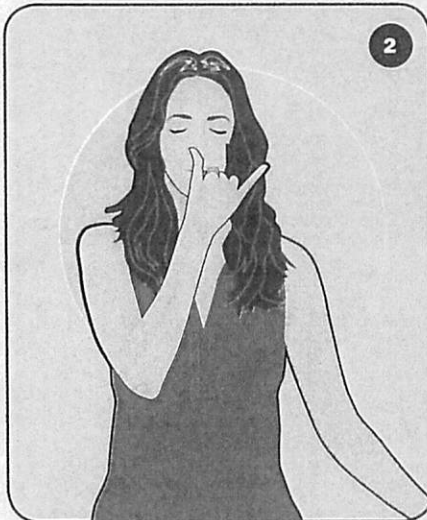
Think about something that you're grateful for, such as spending time with friends or having the chance to meditate. Then gradually transition your thoughts to how you physically feel: the relaxed state of your muscles and the steadiness of your heart-beat. Open your eyes (if you had them closed), stand up and tackle the rest of your day—calm, cool and collected.

TRY IT YOURSELF



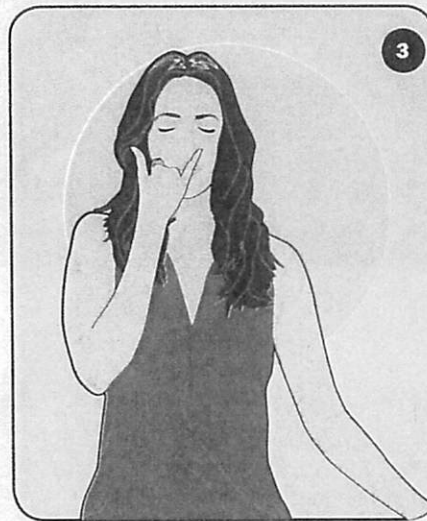
1

Sit in a position that is comfortable enough to sustain for a few minutes of alternate-nostril breathing. (Sitting in a chair is just fine.) This is one of many breathing exercises shown to have some health benefits [see right].



2

Make a “hang 10” sign with your right hand. Hold your right thumb over your right nostril to plug it closed. Inhale slowly through the left nostril until your lungs are full. Hold for four seconds.



3

Release the right nostril, and plug the left with your right pinkie. Slowly exhale. Once you’ve exhaled fully, inhale through the right nostril and then exhale through your left. Do about four rounds on each side—or more if you have time.

SURPRISING BENEFITS OF DEEP BREATHING

1. happier mood

Slow breathing activates areas in the brain connected with antidepressive activities, says Luciano Bernardi of the University of Pavia in Italy.

2. deeper sleep

When people with insomnia practiced slow, even breathing for 20 minutes before going to sleep, they woke up fewer times during the night.

3. less anxiety

In a 2015 randomized controlled trial, healthy women who did eight weeks of twice-weekly yoga with breathing exercises significantly reduced anxiety. (A control group did not.)

4. healthier heart

In one small recent study, slow breathing sessions for 30 minutes a day reduced blood pressure in people with hypertension—and the effect persisted a month later.

5. better air intake

Breathing slowly helps you take in more oxygen. In one study, breathing exercises done several times each day increased oxygen consumption by 37%.

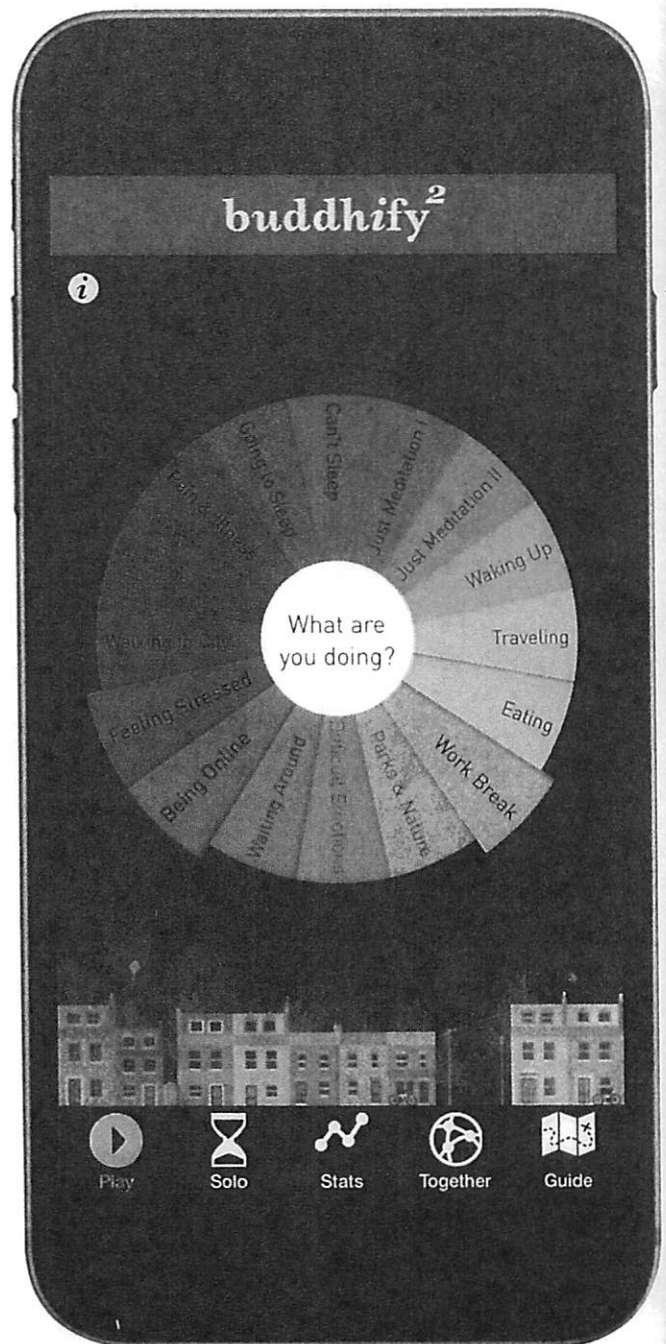
Sources: Psychophysiology, Medical Science Monitor, Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology, Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, Clinical Autonomic Research, Dr. Patricia Gebarg

Meditation Made Mobile: On-the-Go Apps

No, seriously: these downloads turn your iPhone into a pocket mindfulness coach

BY JACQUELINE ANDRIAKOS

BELIEVE IT: THE GADGET THAT NURTURES your emoji and Instagram obsessions can also provide you with a daily dose of Zen. Meditation apps provide both the total newbie and the practiced pro convenient instruction, says Sharon Salzberg, a meditation teacher and co-founder of the Insight Meditation Society in Massachusetts. “All of us can use the little reminders or sense of community that these apps provide as we’re trying to maintain a regular practice in our hectic lives,” she explains. Even Apple is getting in on the movement: the next version of the Apple Watch (out in fall 2016) will feature a mindfulness app called Breathe. But you don’t need a wired watch to calm your body—choose the smartphone app here that best fits your need, schedule and level of experience.



If you're a crazed commuter

TRY: BUDDHIFY

On a flight? Between meetings? Hustling through city streets? The Buddhify app gives mindfulness a modern, metropolitan edge, with bright graphics and solo or guided meditations you can do during the most chaotic junctures in life—even those you would never have imagined could be transformed into a peaceful moment. (\$4.99 on iTunes and Google Play)

If you're a busy beginner

TRY: HEADSPACE

Created by a trained Tibetan Buddhist monk, the website and app require you to first complete a free 10-day introductory meditation program before you can access additional content packs, including a series designed for improving relationships and your health. Bonus: the intro course takes only 10 minutes per day. (Free on iTunes and Google Play; memberships start at \$12.95 per month)



If you need a mini escape

TRY: CALM

Calm.com helps you break from the confines of your day-to-day. In the app version, the program guides you through a few long, deep breaths before you can explore further. Whether your happy place is sitting beside a crackling fireplace or staring out into a coastline sunset, you can customize the background scenery and noise to make it a virtual retreat. Opt for guided sessions—some free, some for a fee—or a solo go-around using the timer. (Free on iTunes and Google Play; subscriptions start at \$3.99 per month)



If you like to mix things up

TRY: WHIL

Whil—created by the founders of the yoga line Lululemon—allows you to power down your mind or train your body with traditional guided meditation practices, as well as video yoga sessions. Take the guesswork out of picking a practice with the WhilPower feature: you input your mood, your intention and the amount of time you can spare, and the app combs through its database and IDs the most fitting option. (Free on iTunes and Google Play)



If you're a master meditator

TRY: INSIGHT TIMER

Tune up your training session by choosing your preferred interval time, ending bell sound and ambient noise. On the app's welcome screen, you can also see in real time who else in the Insight Timer community around the world is deep into a mindfulness session. (Free on iTunes and Google Play)

