

## Five Simple Ways to Reduce Stress and Restore Balance this Summer:

### 1. Have a conversation:

One of the best ways to deal with stress and close the loop on negative emotions or thoughts is to talk about it with someone you trust. A good friend, coach or counselor will truly hear you, and can help you “normalize” the stress by affirming that you’re not alone in your experience. This is especially helpful when dealing with workplace drama, relationship stress or work/life balance, because most of us have been through it at some point, and can totally empathize with others who are experiencing the same thing.

### 2. Move:

One of the best and most proven ways to reduce stress is to move your body! Movement could be running or yoga or even dancing in your kitchen. Movement actually helps us complete the “fight or flight” reaction to a perceived threat (stress) because it gives the signal to our body + brain that we’ve taken action to get ourselves away from the threat and toward safety.

### 3. Play:

Play of any kind generally creates the opportunity for laughter and joy, both of which are amazing antidotes to stress. For some people, this might be imaginative play time with your young kids. For others, maybe it’s goofy, fun play time with your dog. It can even be playing board games or arranging a pick-up soccer game with friends. The point is to do something that tells your brain “I’m happy and safe right now, and it feels great!”



#### 4. Learn a new skill:

Learning a new skill connects us to our "beginner's mind." The beginner's mind gives us a dedicated mental space where failure is both expected and encouraged as we learn, and where creativity and innovation can shine freely. In short, it gives us a chance to do something that's important to us without the threat of expectation and pressure. This is a great way to relieve stress related to work deadlines or performance pressure.

#### 5. Explore breath-work:

There are a number of short breathing exercises that offer a really effective way to reduce stress in the moment, right when you notice it occurring. Breath-work essentially gives you an opportunity to pause and reset during busy, stressful times. To get started, try taking ten deep steady breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth. This takes less than a minute, and can be done literally anywhere, even at your work desk! For those interested in starting a meditation practice, breath-work is a great first step.

There are many other proven stress-reduction strategies to try as well, like reflective journaling and self-care. It all comes down to what works best for you.

**If you're interested in building a routine of healthy habits or practices to reduce stress in your life, check out these resources to learn more or take next steps:**

- Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle by Emily and Amelia Nagoski
- Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less by Greg McKeown
- Atomic Habits: Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results by James Clear
- Holistic Coaching Program (Recovery Resources)
- Mindfulness Peer Groups (Recovery Resources)

#### References:

- Chronic Stress Puts Your Health at Risk. Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20046037>. Accessed 5/18/2022
- Nagoski E, Nagoski A. Burnout: the secret to unlocking the stress cycle. Ballantine Books; 2019

