

# The Guide to Relaxation: Take Your Time and Bust a Chill

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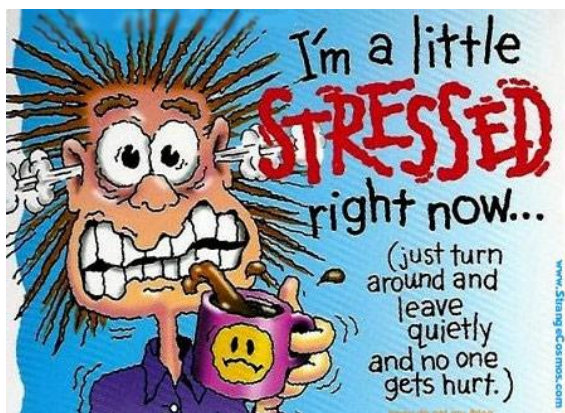
Dr. O'Donnell

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“When you find yourself stressed, ask yourself one question: Will this matter in 5 years from now? If yes, then do something about the situation. If no, then let it go.”

– Catherine Pulsifer

In today's society it is hard to find time to take care of yourself. Human's Stresses and emotions are continuously building up with everyday burdens. The leading factors of school, jobs, family matters, and everyday life can take a toll on one's personal health. Will there ever be an end to this horror story of stressful everyday life? Absolutely not! Being a business management major and current senior at East Tennessee State University, I find myself more stressed than ever before. I always have questions in the back of my head: what kind of job will I soon find? How will I adapt to “real” life after college? Will the economy get better? Hell, will I even graduate college? I find my personal motivation to be extremely lacking this semester. I don't strive to make the best grades and getting by is just fine with me. You could say “senioritis” is highly my issue. I have always been a very self controlled human being and born with thick skin. When talking about stress, I haven't had this issue for the past three years of



college. With my college education coming to an end, my mind is running rapidly. There is so much shit to do and so little time.

Have we forgotten how to relax? For most of us relaxing is zoning out in front of a TV at the end of a

stressful day, going and having some drinks after work or class, and trying to forget about important issues. But this does little to reduce the damaging effects of stress. I myself have tried to forget about important issues but all this has built up. I find myself under a never ending building fortress of stress that even Mariusz Pudzianowski can't budge (Pudzianowski is a famous athlete from Poland in the World Strongest Man Competition). Yes, stress is currently taking me for a ride, but I have many techniques and activities to reduce the side effects.

### **My Personal Methods of Reducing Madness:**

Here is a list below showing some activities I conduct in that lower my stress levels.

#### **Outdoor Activities:**

1. Hiking
2. Fishing
3. Kayaking
4. Sports

#### **Home Entertainment Activities:**

1. Movies/Cartoons
2. Yoga

#### **Social Activities:**

1. Camping trips
2. Vacations
3. Hanging out with friends
4. Drinking Beers (sometimes too many)
5. Smoking Pot
6. Cigarettes

#### **Private Activities:**

1. Reading
2. Sleeping/napping
3. Meditating
4. Hunting
5. Exercise/sports
6. Sexuality
7. Massages/hot tub

As you can see there are many activities that I participate in to lower my stress levels. The main objective of any stress-reducing activity is that it will take your mind off of what is making you stressed. Being out in nature is one activity that works exceptionally well. For me personally, anything that reduces stress usually involves physical activity. As I was a previous high school athlete I have found myself on many intermural sport teams playing various sports. During these intermural sport games/practice, my mind is at ease far away from my issues that cause stress. As you might have read above of one of my personal activities: smoking pot, yes this reduces stress, but certainly doesn't involve any physical activity! Smoking marijuana (pot, dope, devils lettuce, bam bam) is a very efficient way to get your mind off things. Yes this is very illegal so this is not an activity for the narrow minded. Alcohol could be a substitution for smoking marijuana but only if it is used in moderation. These activities explained are just a few of my vices for relieving stress.

### **Personal Meditation Activity**

I obtain maximum amounts of stress relief when I meditate. I believe I heard of this stress relief exercise in second grade and I still rely upon it today. I follow these simple steps to fully rest my body.

1. Lay down on a reclined chair or a couch. Fully extend your legs and keep your body in a pencil shape. Your torso and legs should create a straight line.
2. Place some type of raised surface below your head to give it a slight incline. Close your eyes.
3. Rest your arms down your side. Your arms should be located slightly further down from the beginning of your hip.
4. This simple procedure should be done for each part of your body. Flex your muscles starting from the bottom of your body to the top of your body for ten seconds each (feet to the front of your head). After flexing, fully relax both individual muscles as they should be in a total relaxed state (example: start with your feet. Flex both feet for ten seconds. After flexing totally relax

your foot muscles. Next, move to your calves and front of your shins. Flex Calves and shins for ten seconds. After flexing, totally relax the calve and shin muscles. Do this for each part of your body going upward.)

5. Once you have fully flexed and relaxed all muscles of your body, the next step involves the relaxation inside your head. Your body should be totally relaxed and still, now put yourself in your head in a place of your fantasy. Put yourself in a setting that is most favorable to your likings. I personally like to put myself on a beach or tiki bar in a foreign country.



6. Relax in this state of mind for as long as you feel. When coming out of your “happy place” take it slow and avoid any abrupt situations. The longer your stress-less experience and relaxed state of mind the more stress that will be released.

\*Practice this exercise two to three times a week. It’s truly amazing how taking thirty minutes out of your week will reduce your stress.

There are many exercises that you can find online that can help you alleviate tensions in this stressful environment. The key to overall health is the relaxation of your mind and body. Take some of these tips listed above and try to reduce your own stress levels. Just remember what is important to you and don’t get wrapped up in everyday life. A great tip that I have lived by is, “Don’t take today for granted, because tomorrow is not guaranteed.” Take a second and think about this quote, are the small things in life worth driving yourself crazy?

