

BODY COPERS

Live a Healthy Life ... eat a healthy, balanced **Diet** (multiple servings of fruits, vegetables, legumes, fish and reasonable use of pasta, bread, dairy, poultry) ... **Limit** use of caffeine, sugar, fats, red meat, alcohol ... **Avoid** tobacco products ... stay **Hydrated**, especially with water ... get plenty of **Rest** and **Fresh Air** ...

Breathe ... focus on long, slow, deep, abdominal breaths ... place your hands on your belly ... expand your belly as you inhale and pull it in as you exhale ... try **Box Breathing**

Take a Stretch Break ... try **The Wave** (stand straight with arms at side, palms facing out ... as you take a long deep breath, slowly raise your arms over your head ... as you exhale, slowly bring your arms back down with palms facing down ... repeat this gentle wave 6 times) – **Swinging** (stand straight with feet shoulder width apart, let arms hang loosely at your side ... as you relax, begin swinging arms GENTLY from side to side, twisting your body GENTLY so you look over your shoulder ... breathe slowly finding your rhythm ... begin to slow down, coming to rest at your own speed) – **Around the Bend** (turn head to the right slowly and GENTLY ... turn to left slowly and GENTLY ... bend head forward slowly and GENTLY ... turn shoulder to right, then left ... raise right shoulder and let drop ... raise left and let drop ... raise and drop both ... shake it out)

Enjoy Physical Activity ... work off your tension (get out in the garden, do a little heavy housework, climb some stairs ...) ... exercise regularly (check with your doctor before starting any new exercise program ... choose an exercise you **like** ... **schedule** a regular time for exercise and stick to it ... the easiest, cheapest and safest exercise → a brisk 30 minute **walk** at least three times a week ... if you have trouble fitting in 30 minutes, some studies suggest three 10-minute sessions have almost as strong an impact on your body ... you might also try yoga, running, biking, swimming, jumping rope, low impact aerobics, spin classes

Relax your Body ... choose a quiet place where you won't be interrupted ... sit or lie in a comfortable position ... make sure no part of your body is touching any other ... spend a few minutes concentrating on slowing your breathing ... when muscles are first tensed and then released, they achieve a deeper state of relaxation and the alternating tense/release process "reminds" your body what relaxed feels like ... take a deep breath ... tense a specific muscle group ... count slowly to five ... exhale and release the muscles ... feel the relaxation flow ... **MUSCLE SEQUENCE** → start with HAND+ARM (tighten fist, forearm and biceps) – move to FOREHEAD+TOP OF HEAD (Lift eyebrows high) – then JAWS+CHEEKS (clench your teeth and purse your lips – CHIN+THROAT (draw corners of mouth down hard) – CHEST+BACK – ABDOMINAL MUSCLES – LEGS+FEET (push down hard with toes, watch out for cramps) ... **CONCLUSION** → end with concentrating on your entire body (tense all muscle groups at once ... hold for a count of five ... release ... enjoy the feeling of warmth and heaviness ... allow yourself to sink deeply into the chair or cushion ... stay quietly in this position for a few minutes ... enjoy the peacefulness) ... or **DOWNLOAD** a progressive relaxation app or audio file

RELAX

RESOURCES:

The CALM App (\$70/yr)
HEADSPACE App (\$70/yr)
BETTER SLEEP App – free
MOODFIT App (\$9/month)



MIND COPERS

Focus your Mental Energy ... read a book ... play a **game** ... do a **puzzle** ... see a **movie** ... listen to **music** (music can be one of the most effective ways to “unstress” your life ... enjoy whatever music appeals to you ... try Classical (Pachelbel *Canon in D* – Beethoven *Symphony No. 2, II: Allegretto* – Samuel Barber *Adagio for Strings*, *Canon in D* – Benedictines of Mary & Queen of Apostles *albums of ancient chants and hymns* – Bach: *Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2* by Piotr Anderszewski) or New Age (*Serenity Spa Music* for relaxation and meditation – *Chakra Suite* or *In the Om Zone* by musician and psychologist Steven Halpern) or Sounds of Nature (birds, waves, rain, forest, whatever) or good ole Rock n Roll

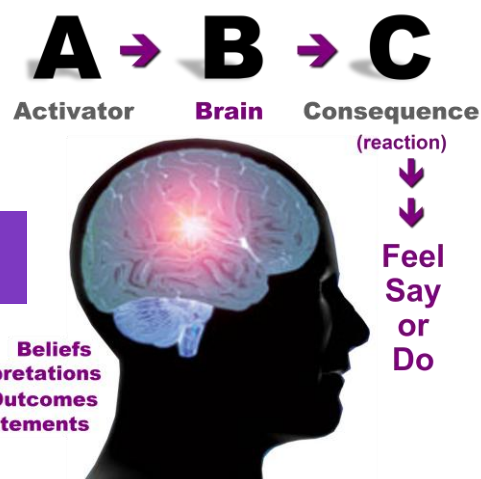
Use your Imagination ... create a **Peaceful Scene** – a mental image of some place that is totally peaceful and relaxing to you ... it might be some happy memory from the past or a place you visited or a dreamed of spot ... keep a picture of this place handy and practice creating a mental image that can become your **Mini-Mind Vacation** to draw on as needed

Express Yourself ... keep a **journal** or diary ... **write** a letter ... **share** your thoughts and feelings (be aware of your feelings – everybody has them – feelings are not right or wrong, they just are – you have a right to feel however you feel – you also have a responsibility to find healthy ways to handle your feelings) ... be **assertive** (be honest and direct – don’t say one thing if you really mean another – don’t hint and hope somebody picks up on it) ... be **positive** (make it a practice to never complain unless you have a constructive suggestion to make things better) ... seek out your **Stress Buddy** (the person who laughs at the same things you do)

Work on a Creative Project ... one very effective way of managing mind stress is to do something **creative** choose something you can get better at and see improvement over time ... this activity can become a **Positive Addiction** ... try sewing – needlework – woodworking – gourmet cooking – writing – sing or play a musical instrument – draw, paint, doodle ...

Change your Reaction ... changing your reaction starts with understanding where reactions come from ... people and events do not “make” you feel or do ... we see things not as they are but as we are ... your feelings and actions are based on your **beliefs**, what you **tell yourself** about the person/situation, and what you **imagine will happen** ... remember that adults need air, food, water, sleep and warmth ... everything else is a preference ... we start to confuse what we’d like with what we have to have ... we **awfulize** (*ain’t it awful*) and play **Top that Stress** (*you think you’ve got it bad*) what you say to yourself may be the most important factor in changing your reaction

Talk Smart to Yourself ... do you talk to yourself? that’s perfectly healthy ... but do you talk back to yourself? ... that is the true secret to changing your reaction and managing mind stress ... challenge your irrational ideas and images ... have a repertoire of short, powerful, generic **Coping Self-Statements** ... choose ones that make sense to your brain ... it could be an old saying, a poem, a verse, or just practical advice (*this, too, shall pass ... one step at a time ... you can do this ... you’ve handled worse things and survived ... not your circus, not your monkeys ... get a grip ... if this is something you’ll laugh about in five years, why wait?*)



learn your A-B-C's

RESOURCES:

HAPPIFY App (\$60/yr)
MINDFULNESS App (\$90/yr)
SANVELLO App (\$54/yr)

COMMON COPERS – *important for everyone*

Take Control of Your Time ... decide your **priorities** and goals ... plan the day's tasks – make a **TO DO** List ... group related tasks together ... check off each when done ... sprinkle small rewards throughout the day ... learn to say **NO** to anything that doesn't fit your priorities ... remind yourself that you are simply refusing a request; you are NOT rejecting another person! ... remember **Parkinson's Law** (work expands to fit the time allotted) ... pat yourself on the back for what you accomplished ... don't worry about what you didn't do (it will wait or disappear) ... **focus on what you did!** ... work to achieve **BALANCE** in your life... you are the only person who can decide your goals and priorities ... have short, medium and long-range **GOALS** to work toward in both work and personal parts of your life ... having a sense of moving forward can keep today's stresses in perspective ...

Develop Support ... support is out there! ... remember the three steps to building a strong support system ... know **WHAT** is supportive to you (what helps you feel understood and appreciated? sharing a laugh? an accepting listener? help freely volunteered? a pat on the back? a smile and a friendly hello? a chat about life outside work?) ... **GIVE** support to others (when you're asked for support, give it freely – your time will come – and, even if it doesn't, we often get so much out of being helpful to another) ... **ASK** for support (too often we don't ask for support; we hint for it – it's not fair to blame others for not being supportive if you have not clearly asked for it – probably 90% of people, including complete strangers, are more than willing to be supportive when asked) ... how do you ask for support? (simply, clearly, directly: *I'd like a pat on the back – I'd appreciate a brief listening ear - I need a hug*) ... seek names to fill in the Six Boxes of your **Support System**

Nurture your Sense of Humor ... your sense of humor is what lets you experience the **Cosmic Chuckle** – the ability to laugh in spite of all the reasons there are NOT to laugh ... laughter and play have **PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS** (increase energy – diffuse negative emotions – change perspective – keep us present-oriented – form a direct bond between people) ... they also have **PHYSIOLOGICAL BENEFITS** (reduce tension – exercise vital organs – clear the respiratory systems – relax the body – stimulate the release of endorphins, the body's natural pain relievers) ... how many times a day do you laugh? ... the average American laughs 15 times a day ... do you want to settle for just being average? ... look for humor ... choose more positive labels ... turn complaints into jokes ... seek out and share funny stuff ... laugh **WITH** people rather than **AT** them (*oo, yeah* humor) ... remember the **Rule of the Five P's** (practice, practice, practice ...)

Lean on your Sense of Serious ... most of us recognize sense of humor, but you also have a sense of serious – the **solid foundation** that grounds your life ... spend time pondering, clarifying and defining your **VALUES** – the principles you live by ... keep in mind that, when we are under stress, our life problems seem to become ALL-IMPORTANT in the universe ... an alternative is to **LOOK OUTSIDE** ourselves – to broaden our perspective (help someone else – take up a worthy cause – volunteer your talents – really listen to a friend) ... all of these activities can help get you back to your core values ... finally, think about what is REALLY important to you in your life ... where are you currently investing your time and energy? ... you have a **RIGHT** to determine what is important to you and to choose to **LIVE** these priorities ... remember, no one every lay on their deathbed and said ...

**I wish
I'd spent
more time
at work.**

