University of Montana Curry Health Center

# Virtual Stress Busting Kit

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By using this kit, you will be able to learn techniques to help cope in stressful situations. You also can follow guides to lower the overall stress in your life.

**15 Second Refresher**

**1) Hands**

Tensed: Cold, clammy, fidgety, clenched

Relaxed: Warm, dry

**2) Shoulders**

Tensed or relaxed? Rotate shoulders forward and backward.

**3) Neck**

Tensed or relaxed? While keeping shoulders level, lean head to the left, right, forward and backward. Look over left shoulder and right shoulder.

**4) Jaw**

Teeth clenched or apart? Gently move jaw from side to side and keep upper and lower teeth apart.

**5) Breathing**

Breathe a deep diaphragmatic breath (abdomen rises first), and hold for the count of five while making fists; raise shoulders to ears and clench your jaw. Blow all the air out at once and relax your body.

**6) Positive Statement**

State a positive comment about yourself.

**7) Smile**

It comes naturally as you relax

*“There is more to life than increasing its speed.”* -Mohandas K. Ghandi

**Find Your Center**

Use breathing to turn off the stress response and find more ease during your day. Breathing can be done anytime and anywhere and only takes a few minutes. Try pairing a breathing exercise with something you already do during the day.

**4-7-8 Breathing Exercise**

1) Breathe in for 4 seconds.

2) Hold your breath for 7 seconds.

3) Breath out slowly for 8 seconds.

Repeat at least 3 times.

This exercise activates the parasympathetic nervous system responsible for “rest and digest.” It can help lower your heart rate and relax your internal organs.

Square box breathing helps tocombat feelings of worry, anxiety and panic. It allows you to regain control through your breath. It regulates your breath and heart rate, alleviating tension and brings a sense of peace and order to your mind and body.

Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Inhale through your nose for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds, exhale out of your mouth for 4 seconds, and then hold again for 4 seconds. Continue this for at least 4 cycles.

**Take A Break** And relieve that stress in 15 minutes.

-Take a warm shower

-Read a poem

-Take 10 slow, deep breaths

-Write a journal entry

-Window shop downtown

-Try something new

-Make a new friend

-Listen to 4 new songs

-Visit the UC Gallery

-Color with crayons

-Buy some flowers

-Visit the humane society

-Make a new food

-Hold a solo dance party

-Go for a run or bike ride

-Call your friends or family

-Take a walk on the Kim Williams Trail

-Drink some tea or a coffee

-Cuddle up with your main squeeze

-Climb the rock wall at Campus Rec

-Rub rosemary oil on your feet

-Do a random act of kindness

-Listen to the Meditation Oasis podcast

-Do a handstand…safely

**Manage Your Stress**

**Make Sleep a Priority**

Without getting the proper rest it will be even harder to retain information. 7-9 hours a night is optimal.

**Fit Exercise in Everyday**

With all the excitement of a new year, it’s easy to put off exercising. Remember, a healthy body = a healthy mind. Get 30 minutes of daily activity. Try walking, a fitness class at Campus Rec, or weights.

**Hydrate**

Always bring a bottle of water with you wherever you go. Hydration is vital to feeling great and energized all day. Challenge yourself to drink half your body weight in ounces of water daily.

**Use a Planner**

Map out your week. Having a central place to write down all of your commitments will help keep you from guessing what you need to be doing.

**Treat Yo Self**

-Write down some positive affirmations and post them around your room

-Reach out to a friend or a loved one you haven’t spoken to in a while

-Declutter your space – donate what you don’t need

-Draw, color, paint – create something just for you

-Try a guided meditation from mindful in minutes

-Find a podcast that makes you feel empowered

-Write a list of 10 things you love about yourself

-Make a cup of tea and breathe in the steam

-Give someone a meaningful compliment

-Make a list of things you are grateful for

-Read the Health Nut blog

-Buy yourself some flowers

-Take a walk by the river

-Diffuse essential oils

-Re-read your favorite book

-Try a fitness class at campus rec

-Volunteer with a local organization

-Take a technology break for an hour

-Wake up early and watch the sun rise

*“How you love yourself is how you teach others to love you.”* -Rupi Kaur

**Relaxation Tips** for your day

Here are four tips to help you relax throughout your day. Combine all four tips for a relaxing recharge to your day.

**Breathing Like You Mean It**

This can be done anytime, anyplace: Slowly draw the deepest breath you can and hold it for at least 6 seconds. Exhale quickly. Do 4 times in a row.

**Quiet Time**

Sit in a quiet place for a few minutes and close your eyes. Take long, slow breaths.

**Take a Staycation**

Escape with visualization: Sit comfortably. Imagine a pleasant, peaceful scene like a sandy beach or quiet forest. Picture yourself there! Focus for a set amount of time and return refreshed.

**Stretch it out**

Stretch your arms up and reach as far as you can. Stretch your legs out and rotate your ankles. Turn your head gently to each side, up and down, to stretch and relax your neck and release tension.

**5 Major Benefits of Sleep** that you might not know about

**Weight Loss**

Poor sleep patterns can lead to weight gain due to lack of stress relief. When stress hormones are at a constant high in the body, and there is no relief from the day’s stresses on the body, it can lead to weight can. By getting the right amount of sleep, maintaining and possibly losing weight is more likely.

**Antioxidants**

Antioxidants are substances that can prevent or slow damage to cells caused by free radicals, unstable molecules that the body produces as a reaction to environmental and other pressures. Melatonin is the sleep hormone produced by the body, but is also one of the most powerful antioxidants that naturally occurs in the body.

**Anti-Depressent**

Too few hours of sleep decreases your ability to manage and handle stress. It is also more likely that you will react negatively to a stressful situation. Long-term sleep deprivation can lead to more negative emotions over time, tricking the brain into thinking negative is the new normal. Receiving enough hours of sleep eliminates long-term sleep deprivation and promotes a happier mindset.

**Better Memory**

Lack of sleep interferes with the brain’s ability to learn, consolidate and retain information. Poor sleep habits can lead to foggy thinking, poor judgement and lack of concentration. The quantity and quality of sleep you maintain, the more likely you will perform better on tests and exams due to increased memory.

**Pain Relief**

Lack of sleep makes it harder for the body to repair damaged cells. Poor sleep quality also causes a decline in pain relieving endorphins. This will make the pain sensations increase. You need sleep to recover from any pain each and every day. This could be as simple as recovery from a morning jog.

**Four A’s** of stress

**Change the situation:**

-Avoid the stressor

-Alter the stressor

**Change your reaction:**

-Adapt to the stressor

-Accept the stressor

**Dealing and Coping with Stressful Situations:**

*Stress management strategy #1: Avoid unnecessary stress*

Not all stress can be avoided, and it’s not healthy to avoid a situation that needs to be addressed. You may be surprised, however, by the number of stressors in your life that you can eliminate.

* **Learn how to say “no”**
* **Avoid people who stress you out**
* **Take control of your environment**
* **Avoid hot-button topics**
* **Pare down your to-do list**

*Stress management strategy #2: Alter the situation*

If you can’t avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Figure out what you can do to change things so the problem doesn’t present itself in the future. Often, this involves changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life.

* **Express your feelings instead of bottling them up.**
* **Be willing to compromise**
* **Be more assertive**
* **Manage your time better**

*Stress management strategy #3: Adapt to the stressor*

If you can’t change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

* **Reframe problems**
* **Look at the big picture**
* **Adjust your standards**
* **Focus on the positive.**
* **Adjusting Your Attitude**

*Stress management strategy #4: Accept the things you can’t change*

Some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can’t prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it’s easier than railing against a situation you can’t change.

* **Don’t try to control the uncontrollable.**
* **Look for the upside**
* **Share your feelings**
* **Learn to forgive.**

**Overall the goal you are striving to achieve: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**What would you have to change in order to accomplish your goal?**

Attitude

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Thinking

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Behavior

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**Apps For Wellness**

**Fitness**

Strava - <https://www.strava.com/mobile>

Records runs, bike rides, and swims routes and times. Also offers routes and challenges.

Nike - <https://www.nike.com/nrc-app>

Training Club app offers home workouts and fitness plans. Run Club tracks runs and offers guided runs.

5K Runner: Couch to 5K Trainer - <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/5k-runner-couch-to-5k-trainer/id448357306>

Specific run plan that is 8 weeks long, 3 times a week, 30 minutes per session.

**Diet**

My Fitness Pal - <https://www.myfitnesspal.com/>

Track food consumption with the apps food database, barcode scanner, recipe importer, and restaurant logging. Will also link to fitbits to track sleep and exercise.

MyPlate - <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/startsimpleapp>

Track food, make meals plans, and find recipes on this app.

**Meditation/Mindfulness**

Headspace - <https://www.headspace.com/>

Meditation guide with different purposes in regards to sleep, anxiety, exercise and more.

Sanvello - <https://www.sanvello.com/>

Uses clinical and evidence based techniques to help clients feel better through guided meditations, support and resources. Premium access is covered with some health insurances. Offers more free meditation if you use .edu emails.

Calm - <https://www.calm.com/>

Mindfulness app with guided meditations and mindfulness experts, neuroscientists, psychologists and teachers.

**Goals**

BetterYou - <https://www.betteryou.ai>

A digital coach that allows individuals to maximize their time and stay focused on goals that matter.

Woop - <https://woopmylife.org/>

Science-based mental strategy app that people can use to find and fulfill their wishes, set preferences, and change their habits.

Google Calendar - <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/r?pli=1>

Outllook Calendar - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.microsoft.office.outlook&hl=en_US>

Mental health and well-being are essential to the academic success of students. Curry Health Center is dedicated to supporting the health and well-being of the University of Montana community.

**Ways We Can Support You**

**Resources**

-Individual Counseling - <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/Counseling/default.php>

-Health Coaching - <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/wellness/Health%20Coaching.php>

-Mental Health Visits with a Medical Provider - <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/medical/Walk%20In%20Care%20and%20Appointments/default.php>

-Group Therapy - <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/Counseling/Seminars.php>

-Curry 360 - <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/wellness/Curry%20360.php>

-Bereavement Counseling - <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/Counseling/default.php>

-Mouth Guards for Teeth Grinding - <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/dental/Nightguards.php>

-Urgent One-Time Counseling Appointments - <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/Counseling/Crisis.php>

-Test Anxiety Seminars, Mindfulness Practice Workshops, Overcoming Anxiety Group Support - <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/Counseling/Seminars.php>

If you would like more support, make a Virtual Stress Busting appointment - <https://curryhealthcenterhealthportal.sa.umt.edu/>

These short appointments (30 minutes or less) are sure to unfrazzled you and help you feel calm and ready to tackle whatever the semester throws your way. We are happy to help!

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 impact on the UM campus, CHC Wellness has created a COVID-19 Virtual Stress Busting Kit for you to download - <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/Docs-General/chc-covid-stress-busting-kit-links.pdf>

The fully accessible version is available here - <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/Docs-General/CHC%20Virtual%20Stress%20Busting%20Kit%202020%20links.docx>

Inside you’ll find tips, tricks, and links to help you stay motivated, moving, and even relaxed in stressful times. Be Well UM!

**Wellness Is Open**

Monday-Friday 9AM-4PM

Call 243-2809 or Text 406-404-3775 with questions or concerns.

Visit our website:

<https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/wellness/default.php>

for more information.