

15 Ways to Relax in 5 Minutes or Less

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It's easy to relax when you're on vacation as you lie on the beach or stroll through museums. However, peace can be more elusive when your kids are home sick and your inbox is overflowing at work.

Fortunately, there are ways to make relaxing anywhere simple and quick. Try these 15 foolproof methods for unwinding at home or at the office.

Relaxing at Home:

Many studies suggest that prolonged television watching tends to be a short-term pleasure that contributes to long-term discontent. Search for more effective methods for making yourself comfortable at home.

- 1. Turn off your phone.** Disconnect for a while each day. Make family meals and the final hours before bed a phone-free time.
- 2. Listen to music.** Put on your local classical radio station or any music that you enjoy. Sit down and pay attention without trying to multitask.
- 3. Meditate briefly.** Even a few minutes of meditation can increase your mindfulness. Pull up a cushion and observe your thoughts. You could also do walking meditation around your living room or patio.
- 4. Visualize peace.** Guided imagery is another powerful technique. Picture a scene that makes you feel tranquil inside and out. Imagine yourself walking through a field of flowers or swimming in a cool lagoon.

5. **Massage your feet.** Five minutes is barely time to draw a bath, but you can soak your feet. Fill a basin with warm water. Squeeze your heels and gently pull on each toe.

6. **Drink warm milk.** Any warm beverage without caffeine can be soothing. Add vanilla or cinnamon to warm milk or sip a cup of chamomile tea before bed.

7. **Sniff lavender.** Sample a variety of essential oils used for relaxation. You may discover a personal favorite, or **you may want to rotate among lavender, valerian, and bergamot.**

Relaxing at Work:

Are you afraid to take time out when you're busy at work and your boss is watching? **Remember that periodic breaks make you more productive.** Here are a few more things you can do.

1. **Breathe deeply.** When you feel tense, turn your attention to your breath. Inhale deeply from your abdomen and lengthen your exhalations.

2. **Adjust your posture.** Scan your body to release any spots where you may be holding on to stress. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and press them down. Soften your forehead and blink your eyes.

3. **Take a walk.** If possible, head outside to enjoy the sunshine and fresh air. If you need to stay indoors, climb a few flights of stairs or walk from one end of the office to the other.

4. **Stretch your muscles.** Stand up and perform a few static stretches. Lower

yourself into a forward bend. Clasp your elbows behind your back.

5. **Chew gum.** Would you believe that chewing gum fights anxiety? Pop a stick into your mouth for a few minutes before performance appraisals or sales calls.

6. **Squeeze a ball.** The next time you see a tradeshow booth giving away stress balls, grab one. Keep one on your desk to play with occasionally. It may help with arthritis pain too.

7. **Laugh about it.** Look for the humor in challenging situations. Share a joke with a coworker or post funny quotes around your desk. **Laughter loosens up your muscles and boosts your immune system.**

8. **Smile more.** Some scientists think that smiling reduces stress because it lowers your heart rate. Start the day by wishing your coworkers a cheerful good morning and remember to look happy when you're on the phone.

Regular relaxation keeps your mind and body healthy and strong. Experiment to find the practices that relieve your stress and renew your energy.