

# 14 Ways to Relax Without Alcohol or Food

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Happy hours can be a great way to unwind after a stressful day at work. You bond with your coworkers, talk about your day, and listen to some upbeat music. On the other hand, if you make such activities a regular routine, **you could be taking in more alcohol and empty calories than you want.**

Plus, you may be training yourself to think that consumption is the only way to relax.

You can't remove stress from daily life, but you can learn to deal with it without creating more troubles. Start with these ideas for relaxing without alcohol or food.

## **Calorie-Free Ways to Relax on Your Own:**

- 1. Breathe deeply.** Pause and take a few calming breaths. Inhale from down in your diaphragm instead of up in your chest. Lengthen your exhalations to match your inhalations. Focus on the air as it moves in and out of your nostrils.
- 2. Meditate and pray.** Sit down for a few moments and connect with yourself and the divine. Observe your thoughts without judging them. Give thanks for your blessings.
- 3. Engage in visualization.** Close your eyes and imagine something that makes you feel happy and inspired. Picture yourself surrounded by family and friends or excelling at a task that you find fulfilling.
- 4. Draw a bath.** Fill your tub with warm water and enjoy a luxurious soak. Buy fragrant bath salts or make your own. Set out fluffy towels, candles, and other

accessories of your choice.

5. **Stretch your body.** Make it a habit to stand up about every half hour when you're working at your desk. Place your hands on your lower spine for support, and do a slight backbend. Rise up tall, and reach your hands down to the floor, bending your knees if necessary.
6. **Take a walk.** Stroll around the block or hike the trails at your local park. Pick a quiet time of day and explore new routes.
7. **Appreciate nature. Scientific studies prove that nature has the power to soothe us.** Head outdoors or watch videos about sandy beaches and ancient forests.
8. **Learn progressive relaxation.** Experiment with progressive muscle relaxation. Start with your hands, squeezing each muscle group as you breathe in, and releasing as you breathe out. Continue across the rest of your body.

#### **Calorie-Free Ways to Relax with Others:**

1. **Practice yoga.** Yoga cultivates community as well as stress relief and physical fitness. Bring a friend with you to your next class. Invite others to join you for breakfast afterwards.
2. **Play sports.** As long as you avoid extreme competition, sports can be relaxing. Schedule a game of tennis or darts.
3. **Go dancing.** Take listening to music a step further by getting out on the dance floor. Sign up for rumba lessons or spend your next date night at a club with a live band.

4. **Pet your dog.** Remember your animal companions too. **Studies show that talking to them actually tends to be less stressful than interacting with humans because we don't worry about being judged.**
  
5. **Talk it over.** On the other hand, your fellow humans are probably going to have more insights into how to deal with your love life or conflicts at work. Call a friend when you need to vent or discover a different perspective on whatever is on your mind.
  
6. **Laugh it up.** Humor makes our struggles easier to bear. Spend time with others who encourage you to see the funny aspects of parenthood or practicing law.

Whether you're on your own or surrounded by friends, you can banish stress safely and effectively. Learning to relax without alcohol or food will help you to stay slim and peaceful.