

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY
STRESS REDUCTION WITH ESMILDA ABREU, MA

Exercise #1 Breathing

This is a simple exercise that takes only few minutes to do. The goal is to do this for approximately ten breaths. It is optimal to do several times a day. It is a helpful way to regain control and relax the mind during times of tension.

1. Arrange it so you will not be interrupted.
2. Breathe through your nose, for a count of two and focus your mind on your breath. Exhale for a count of four.
3. Scan your body from head to toe, for approximately 30 seconds stretch to release tension.
4. Go back to your breath, making it deeper and slower, exhaling longer than inhaling.
5. Become aware of your wandering mind and keep bringing it back to your breath and body.
6. Drop your shoulders and your head. Breathe and repeat.
7. Slowly stretch out and smile.

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Exercise #2 Success Visualization

The meditation state can also be induced by activities such as running, cycling or walking. It is very similar to the feeling of focused attention that was achieved in class with the hypnosis experience. During these times of focused attention Endorphins, the body's own natural sedatives, are released. Meditation also activates the body's relaxation response and changes the effects that stress has on the body.

A simple meditation technique anybody can do is to rest quietly for twenty minutes and repeat a word or a phrase over and over. A word that elicits a feeling of peace in you may be used such as *Relax*, *Deep Peace* or any other word that has special meaning to you. The word *Healing* may be a good choice as well.

1. Find a quiet place to reduce distractions and sit in comfortable position. Encourage good posture so that your torso is long and the breath can be even and rhythmic. Keep your legs and arms uncrossed and your shoulders slightly drooping.
2. Keep your mouth slightly open and make sure your teeth are not closed together. You may allow your eyes to close, as you turn your focus inward.
3. Then focus on your word or phrase with a relaxed attitude.
4. Understand that you will have other thoughts pass by. When they do just let them pass and bring yourself slowly and patiently back to your word. Be kind to yourself as you explore this new experience. There is no right way so experiment and see what works for you.

There are many possible benefits of meditation such as slow even breath rate, an even pulse rate, a feeling of peace. You may find yourself continuing to use this exercise long after your time at Montclair State University. It may take some planning and practice, but you may find that the results are well worth it.