

A young woman with long brown hair in a ponytail is sitting on the grass in a park, meditating with her eyes closed and hands resting on her knees. She is wearing a light pink short-sleeved shirt with a subtle pattern and a small hoop earring. The background is a soft-focus view of trees and sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a warm, golden glow. A large, semi-transparent orange circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title text.

# STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR TEENS

*Breathing &  
Relaxation Exercises*

# BELLY BREATHING

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Belly breathing is the first step to begin to relax the mind and body. The immediate benefits of this breathing are that it quiets the mind, reduces cravings, and relaxes the body by balancing the nervous system. The long-range benefits are greater emotional control, increased perceptual sensitivity, and increased mental clarity. Practice this exercise throughout your day for feeling your best.

- Sit quietly and comfortably in a chair, settle in, and become aware of the feeling of sitting.
- Lengthen or stretch your spine.
- Lift, release, and relax your shoulders.
- Feel your feet flat on the floor.
- Place your hands on your belly.
- Let the belly rise on the in breath and fall on the out breath.
- Allow the sides of your rib cage to expand and contract just like an accordion.
- Let go of any tension on the out breath.
- Remember that every out breath is an opportunity to let go and relax.
- Enjoy the feeling of calm energy.

# AWARENESS BREATHING

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Awareness breathing builds on belly breathing and is so easy. We manage our energy through awareness. Having a breath-awareness practice hones the ability to reduce stress and annoying fear-based thinking. When we are centered during awareness, we are open and receptive.

The benefits of an awareness breathing practice are that it brings you into the present moment and relaxes you. Awareness breathing is helpful in conversations to increase your ability to be a deep listener, remain calm in heated situations, and enhance clarity and decision making.

- Begin by bringing attention to the feeling of breath.
- Feel the breath as it flows in and out of the nostrils.
- Notice there is a slight touch of coolness on the inhalation.
- Notice a slight touch of warmth on the exhalation.
- Allow your breathing to be even and relaxed.
- As your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the awareness of breathing.
- Breathe comfortably in and out through the nostrils.
- Become aware of sensations in your body.
- Enjoy the sensation of breathing with awareness.

# FIVE-MINUTE WEEKLY RELAXATION

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One exercise that you can do to release stress is to take regular breaks. While there are many places to stretch out and relax, it's best to find a place where you can lay down comfortably. This time allows you to relax, which will put you in a receptive mode.

- Find a place of quiet and silence where you can lay down and get comfortable.
- Start with yawn breathing by opening your jaw and making some fake yawns.
- Allow your mind to wander and relax and let your eyes close and soften.
- Relax and do some soft belly breathing.
- Notice the rise and fall of your belly as you relax.
- Let go of any tension in your body and worries in your mind.
- Shift your focus onto your senses, feeling your body breathe.
- Shift or stretch your body and shift from thinking to feeling or sensing.
- Connect with the sound and feeling of your breath.
- Allow gravity to hold you as you relax deeply.

# SMILE BREATHING

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One way to get grounded is to just smile and breathe. It is simple self-care. The mind-body connection is powerful, and a smile floods the body with chemicals and hormones of happiness as you crinkle your eyes and curl the corners of your lips upward.

Smile breathing is a simple shifting of the body with a smile and breath focus. You can begin by allowing a smile to enter the mind creating an inner smile. Then allow the smile muscles to brighten as you continue to breathe. A small but powerful shift like this can be used anytime and anywhere.

- For one minute, focus on gentle breathing
- Begin with observing where you feel the breath in the body.
- As you inhale allow an inner smile to enter the mind.
- Invite the smile muscles to brighten as you continue to breathe slowly.
- Allow the feelings of the smile to move throughout your body.
- Finally, bring a smile to your face and continue feeling and observing.
- Breathe in calm, breathe out a smile.
- Begin to notice the body and senses as you relax and smile.
- Take this smile into the rest of your day.

# YAWN BREATHING

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We know that stretching helps reduce stress and tension in the body that builds up throughout the day. The benefits of yawn breathing include released muscle tension, increased oxygen, and supplying the body with more energy. Conscious yawning generates a deep sense of relaxation, calmness, and alertness.

- Begin by taking some slow, deep breaths.
- Relax the jaw by stretching your mouth open.
- Do this a few times, and then make a long, sighing sound.
- Make the action of yawning. After about four or five fake yawns, some real yawns will come.
- Notice what happens in your mouth, throat, chest, and belly.
- Release the tension in the jaw. Relax and loosen all the facial muscles.
- Repeat for ten yawns. Pause in between for a few seconds.
- Allow yourself to stretch your arms and shoulders as you continue yawning.
- Now just relax into your natural breath.