



Beat Burnout and Solve Stress

Six simple techniques for
entrepreneurs to lower
stress that take less than
60 seconds each

by Shaya Kass, PhD
of Mindful About Life Coaching

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Shaya Kass, PhD

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Shaya@MindfulAboutLife.com

1-800-544-0559

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Being an entrepreneur is stressful. Our job is to manage the stress while we manage everything else going on in the business. Needless to say – it ain't easy.

Here you have six simple techniques to lower the stress. This will put you in a better headspace to make better choices for your business and your customers.

#1 Breath

I know you don't need to be reminded to breath. (And if you did, you would have passed out already and me writing it wouldn't help! 😊) But here is the thing.

Pramanik and colleagues did a study in 2009 and showed that if you breathe in for 4 seconds and exhale for 6 seconds, and you do this for five minutes, your blood pressure goes down significantly and there is a slight fall in heartrate. Somehow, longer exhales stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system which helps us to relax.

Now I know I promised under 60 seconds. And I cannot show you research that only 6 of these breaths will lower your stress. But I can tell you it works for me.

Try it!

Pramanik, T., Sharma, H. O., Mishra, S., Mishra, A., Prajapati, R., & Singh, S. (2009). Immediate effect of slow pace bhasrika pranayama on blood pressure and heart rate. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 15(3), 293-295.

#2 Gratitude

O'Leary and Dockray did a study in 2015 where they asked women to list 5 things they were grateful for, four times each week for three weeks. Their stress levels went down by 14%.

So, take a moment right now. What are you grateful for? A relationship that you are in? The freedom you get from having your own business? Your education or experience? Your good health?

Let it sink in a moment.

Has your stress level gone down?

O'Leary, K., & Dockray, S. (2015). The effects of two novel gratitude and mindfulness interventions on well-being. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 21(4), 243-245.

#3 Go for a Walk

In 2018, Elsadek and colleagues did a study in China where they asked people to take a 15 minute walk along streets with either a lot of trees or with few trees. Take a guess which reduced stress more.

If you guessed trees, you got it right. There is a bunch more research about how nature improves mood. (An aside, as I write this I am sitting in a bar looking out to the sea and a very colorful sunset. If you want to join me, I will buy you a beer.)

Of course, this tip depends a lot on where you are. It may take you 10 minutes to get from your office to the street. If your office is in Midtown Manhattan or Central London you may have a hard time finding a tree. If you work from home, it is probably a lot easier to use this technique.

I believe that even watching a YouTube video of a walk in the forest can help. Try it. Tell me how it goes.

Elsadek, M., Liu, B., Lian, Z., & Xie, J. (2019). The influence of urban roadside trees and their physical environment on stress relief measures: A field experiment in Shanghai. *Urban forestry & urban greening*, 42, 51-60.

#4 Time Management

To manage your time well, you need to do three things—structure and protect your time and adapt when needed. But for many freelancers and entrepreneurs we are always putting out fires.

So take 45 seconds and decide what you want to work on for the next hour. Then take 15 seconds and set an alarm, silence your phone and close all other windows on your computer. Whatever it is, it will wait.

Try to do this for just two hours each day and you will be more productive and you will feel more life satisfaction and job satisfaction.

Aeon, B., Faber, A., & Panaccio, A. (2021). Does time management work? A meta-analysis. *PLOS ONE*, 16(1), e0245066. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0245066>

#5 Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive Muscle Relaxation is a technique where you tense up muscles and then let them relax. It has been around since the 1920s. It seems to work because you are both sending a message from your brain to your body (tense up) and sending a message from your body to your brain (relax).

Toussaint and his colleagues set out to see if it actually worked and, sure enough, it does. Now they had students doing this for 20 minutes. Does just one minute help? Well, there is only one way to find out.

For 10 seconds make a fist with one hand as tight as you can, then release it and relax for 10 seconds. Now make a fist with your other hand for 10 seconds and then relax for 10 seconds.

What do you say?

Toussaint, L., Nguyen, Q. A., Roettger, C., Dixon, K., Offenbächer, M., Kohls, N., ... & Sirois, F. (2021). Effectiveness of progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, and guided imagery in promoting psychological and physiological states of relaxation. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2021(1), 5924040.

#6 Accept the Stress

This technique came to me while reading an article by Crum, Jamieson and Akinola from 2020. We often think of stress as something negative. Heck, this whole report basically says that stress is bad, let's get rid of it.

What if stress is good? If stress is leading to burnout, then it is too much (and probably bad). But what individual things are stressing you right now that are getting you into action?

We could even argue that the overwhelm of stress got you into action to read this report. And that led you to learning stress reduction techniques.

So, what one stressor can you look at right now and leverage it to get into action?

Crum, A. J., Jamieson, J. P., & Akinola, M. (2020). Optimizing stress: An integrated intervention for regulating stress responses. *Emotion*, 20(1), 120.

There you have it! 6 short and sweet techniques to help you relax.

Now here comes a shocker – are you ready?

You actually have to practice them and change some of your habits. I guess that is the hard part.

Have you been trying to change your habits with no luck? I have a proven system that helps you first look at your beliefs and attitudes. Then you choose actions and start getting the results you want.

If you need help changing your habits and getting into action, you can find me at

Shaya@MindfulAboutLife.com or

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