

GIMME 5

STRESSED OUT? TAKE JUST FIVE MINUTES OFF TO DO ANY ONE OF THESE SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE EXERCISES THAT WILL HELP YOU RELAX.
BY NAWAZ MODI

EXPERTS in the field of stress management increasingly regard exercise as the safest and most effective way to reduce stress. Relaxation techniques can help greatly and one of these methods is called progressive relaxation. Here's how it can be used to reduce stress levels in some of the common problem areas. You may want to use this technique right after some stressful encounter or as a means of regularly de-stressing yourself a couple of times each day.

NECK AND SHOULDERS

Tense these muscles by shrugging as hard as you can, while simultaneously pressing your head and shoulders back against your back support. Hold on to this tension for a slow count of five. Release the tension, letting the shoulders drop and go limp. You'll feel these muscles becoming warmer, heavier and more and more relaxed.

ARMS

Clench your fists as tightly as you can, while tensing all the muscles in the arms as much as possible. Hold on to this tension for a slow count of five, before releasing it completely. Feel all the tension flowing away.

FACE

The facial muscles are usually under considerable pressure as we try to conceal our emotions from others.

* To relax the forehead, frown hard, and hold this tension for a slow count of five, and then relax.

To relax the mouth and throat, strongly press the tip of your tongue to the roof of

your mouth, while clenching your jaws firmly. As earlier, hold this tension for a slow count of five before relaxing. While relaxing, let the lower jaw hang apart from the upper jaw, while allowing the tongue to rest loosely in the mouth.

ABDOMEN AND CHEST

Hold a deep breath while drawing in your stomach, as if in anticipation of a blow. Feel the tension building up in the upper body and hold on to it for a slow count of five, before releasing it and letting the abdomen go limp and flop right out.

THIGHS, HIPS AND CALVES:

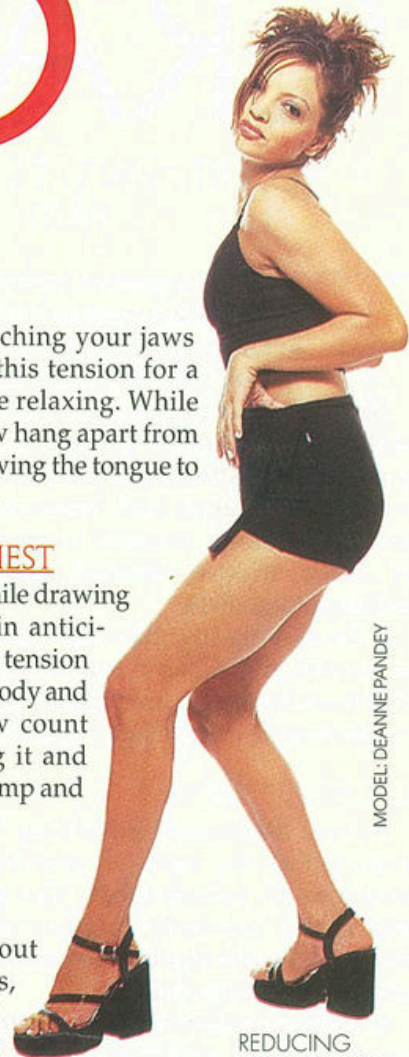
Sit down and stretch out your legs. Point your toes, straighten your legs and squeeze your buttocks tight. Hold this tension for a slow count of five and then relax completely.

Perform each exercise three times before moving on to the next one.

Notice that as you relax further, your body gradually becomes warmer and heavier. Besides feeling relaxed, you should also feel calm and at peace with yourself.

All of the above exercises take under five minutes to perform. You should ideally try to lie still for a further five minutes thereafter. Make sure that your breathing is slow, deep and controlled right through.

Try and make the time to go through this exercise every night before going to bed. End today by preparing for a better tomorrow.



MODEL: DEANNE PANDEY

REDUCING YOUR STRESS LEVELS IS EASIER THAN YOU THINK!