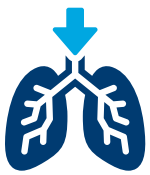


Finding Quiet in a Loud Society

Peace and quiet are elusive things, especially with all that is going on **these days**. It seems that no matter how hard we may try, the noise of the outside world still sneaks in, whether via news and social media, the worried voices of our loved ones, or even our own internal anxieties.

Being healthy—physically, emotionally and mentally—requires the basics: eating well, exercising, keeping work and home life balanced and maintaining good relationships. But there are times when even the standards can't prevent stress, anxiety and noise from creeping in.

In such cases, there other options that are almost universally accepted as means for finding that elusive peace and quiet:



Deep Breathing

Deep breathing focuses on using the diaphragm (the spot just under your rib cage) to draw slow, deep breaths into the lungs and to release them slowly.

Take a couple of minutes every hour to practice some deep breathing.



Laughing Out Loud

Seek to find humor, even in the toughest circumstances. Deep, prolonged laughter is scientifically proven to improve mood and even physical health.



Stretching

Stretching exercises such as yoga or Pilates can relieve tension, make your body more flexible and produce a calming effect. But even just shrugging

your shoulders, stretching your arms and rolling your neck a few times a day can have positive results.



Practicing Gratitude

Science is finding that gratitude has a powerful effect on our well-being, and practicing gratitude is easy: Start a gratitude journal, tell someone when you appreciate something they've done, or just think of three things you're grateful for and jot them down.



Meditation and Visualization

Meditation involves "quieting the mind" by blocking out sensory input and distraction, while visualization involves using the brain's creative capacity to create a stress-free experience, much

like daydreaming. Try to carve out 15 minutes daily to quiet your mind and body.



Seeking Out Nature

In Japan, getting out into nature is called "forest bathing." According recent studies, you don't even have to hike or otherwise exercise to gain the mental and physical benefits from being in nature. All you have to do is be with the trees.



Calming Thoughts

Our thought patterns often cause or contribute to the stress that we are feeling. The next time you encounter a stressful situation, take

a moment to tune into your thoughts and feelings. Write these thoughts down and then write down a more positive replacement.



Expand Your Time

To increase happiness, focus on the here and now. Thinking about the present (versus the future) has been found to slow down the perceived passage of time and this, in turn,

reduces anxiety and worry.