Stress management

Deep breathing

What is deep breathing?
Deep breathing helps you deal with stress, tension, anxiety, and anger. It can be done almost anywhere. It is also called diaphragmatic breathing. It helps in many ways.

It helps you to relax. Deep breathing alone can be enough to relax you, without needing to meditate or listen to tapes.

It takes your mind off what is bothering you. If you focus very hard on your breathing, you will be thinking less about other things. Any time you notice your attention turning to stressful thoughts, just shift your attention back to your breathing.

It helps with the symptoms of anxiety. When you become anxious or stressed you are likely to take shallow, rapid breaths. You may even breathe so fast that you become dizzy or have blurred vision, a feeling of pins and needles in your skin, and chest pain. Slow deep breathing can help to relieve these symptoms quickly.

How do I do this exercise?
1. Find a quiet place where you won’t be distracted.
2. You may want to sit in a comfortable chair or lie on the floor with a pillow under the small of your back.
3. Breathe in through your nose, slowly and deeply, pushing your stomach out as you breathe in.
4. Say the word "relax" silently as you breathe out. Picture your stress and tension begin to leave as you breathe out.
5. Breathe out slowly through your mouth, letting your stomach come in.

Repeat these deep breaths 10 times. You will notice how much more relaxed you feel after a very few minutes of controlled breathing.

Do this 5 times a day.

Other ways to help you relax include mental imaging and progressive muscle relaxation.