

Stress Management

Seeing the Humor

- Reading a funny story or joke can be a great way to make you laugh.
- Keeping a humorous calendar in your cubicle is a good way to have a laugh at hand, particularly if it's the page-a-day type. Just make sure it's appropriate and permitted in your office.
- Seeing the humor in a stressful situation can be difficult, but it can also help you put things in perspective. Try to imagine how the situation might appear from the outside, or how you might see it down the road.
- Sharing a laugh with friends and family is always a good pick-me-up. When sharing jokes at work, be sensitive to others, and make sure that what you're sharing is appropriate.

Deep Breathing

Deep breathing is an excellent relaxation tool that can be adapted for almost any situation. It also has some physical benefits, including:

- Reduction in blood pressure
- Reduction in muscle tension
- Boost in metabolism
- Clearing of the mind
- Boost in endorphins (our natural painkillers)

The basic technique is just like it sounds: slowly breathe in through your nose, and then breathe out through your mouth. Try counting slowly as you do this. Each breath should take ten to twenty seconds. (You will be able to take longer breaths with practice.)

When you are in a stressful situation, it is easy to unobtrusively deep breathe to keep yourself cool. This will also help prevent some of the harmful physical effects of stress, since stress causes us to breathe faster, making our bodies work harder.

If you have a few moments to yourself, sit down, close your eyes, and spend a few minutes deep breathing. Deep breathing can also be used in conjunction with picturing your sanctuary or stretching.

Creating a Stress Log

A stress log can help you identify your major stressors, and it can help you identify trends in those stressors. Identifying the cause of stress can help you reduce the number and impact of stressors in your life, and it can help you manage the stress that does occur.