

# CALMER



## 21 relaxation techniques to relieve stress at work

While it may be common knowledge that work often causes stress, the ways to relieve that stress are less well known. Discover a few great ways to chill out here, as well as the importance of workplace stress management and practicing relaxation techniques.

If you're currently feeling stressed, anxious, or simply wish to feel a little calmer, carry on reading for plenty of ways you can unwind and relieve stress at work.

Why stress relief at work is important

At Calmer, our aim is to support all types of worker - from entrepreneurs to freelancers, CEOs to start-up founders, small business teams to large co-working groups - in managing their mental health and wellbeing through preventative methods. And our work is much needed: stress is the leading cause of physical illness, with over 25 working days lost per person each year in the UK (according to Mental Health Foundation).

Relaxation in the workplace is one easy way to lower stress levels, reduce absenteeism, and improve productivity. While it may not be possible to always avoid stressful situations, finding solace can certainly ease the mental and emotional strain that may be felt.

21 relaxation techniques to relieve stress at work

Discover how to reduce your cortisol levels, and excess tension in your body, through these simple relaxation techniques that you can use at work.

Just like exercise, finding the right mental health exercises and relaxation activities can take a few tries. We're all different, and enjoy different experiences, so give a few of these a go the next time you're feeling stressed.

Many of these relaxation techniques can be done at your desk, or in your break out area, in a couple of minutes:

### **1. Read a book or magazine for a few minutes**

Pick up your favourite fiction novel, glossy magazine, or get inspiration from the Calmer Community's book club. Getting lost in another world can provide a welcome distraction from a stressful situation, and return you to a calmer state.

### **2. Make yourself a cup of tea**

Step away from your work and make yourself a cup of tea - this could be followed by a tea meditation, or simply having a chat with a coworker who's also on a tea break.

### **3. Focus on your breathing**

For most of our day, we don't think about breathing - our body breathes for us. However, we tend to breathe more shallowly when we don't focus on breathing, so a simply focus on the intake of air, holding, and exhaling can bring more oxygen into our bodies, and calm our thoughts. For more, follow guided breathing techniques in the Calmer Community.

### **4. Run an errand away from your desk**

If you have an errand that involves leaving your usual work space, now may be the time to do it. Taking a letter to the Post Office, or running a USB stick to another department, can provide a welcome distraction and a change of scenery for a few minutes. Plus, you'll have ticked another item off your to-do list!

### **5. Pour yourself a glass of water**

According to the NHS, we should all be drinking 6 to 8 glasses of water per day. How many glasses have you had today? Drinking water will also improve your productivity and reduce your chance of developing a headache.

### **6. Get off social media**

Unless your job entails working on social media, closing all social media apps can provide instant stress-relief. Studies have shown that regular social media usage can have a negative impact on an individual's wellbeing, so a simple fix is to limit your time on social media when at work.

### **7. Take a walk around the block**

If you work in a position where you can leave your workplace, take the opportunity to walk around the block once or twice. Walking - and being active generally - can improve your mood, and boost your mental wellbeing.

### **8. Look for a local exercise class or gym**

Similarly, you could take a few minutes to find a local exercise class or gym to try out. You could also explore the range of online classes that are available, if you prefer a home workout. Adults are encouraged to do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week to stay in good health, and this can reduce your stress levels too.

### **9. Practice mindfulness at work**

With bluechip companies like Google and Facebook rolling out mindfulness schemes for their employees, it's clear that practicing mindfulness at work can improve how you feel, and boost your productivity too.

### **10. Doodle for a few minutes**

If you have a pen and paper handy, doodling can provide a welcome distraction from your current situation, and give you a different activity to focus on. The pleasure gained from doodling can reduce your stress levels, and enable you to take a different approach when you return to working.

### **11. Listen to your favourite song**

A 2013 study found that listening to music reduced the stress levels in participants, and in fact it's quite easy to feel that same effect when listening to your favourite songs. Give yourself a moment away from your desk and enjoy listening to relax.

### **12. Get to know your stress**

Stress manifests itself differently in each of us, so it may be worth reading up on stress and how to manage it effectively. The simple act of understanding how you feel, and how to cope, can provide welcome relief.

### **13. Meditate for a minute**

Meditating can provide a moment of solace within a busy work day. Join the Calmer Community to receive our One Mindful Minute newsletters, and get a meditation prompt straight to your inbox each week.

### **14. Recall a previous holiday or peaceful place**

Similar to meditating, try remembering a previously relaxing moment or place. This could be a holiday, your comfy armchair at home, or even curling up with your pet. Even the act of recalling a distant, peaceful memory can help relieve tension and stress.

### **15. Use a relaxation spray or rollerball**

The nose and memory are closely linked, so using a relaxation spray or rollerball can help you to create a pattern of mindful moments, and you'll instantly feel a little bit better each time you smell that familiar scent.

### **16. Make your own self-care plan**

While you might not be able to sneak away from work to run yourself a bubble bath, creating a self-care plan can give you the tools to get through stressful experiences at work, and reward yourself too.

### **17. Get inspiration from the *This is Calmer* book**

Have a thumb through the [This is Calmer](#) book to find inspiration and courage in your work and life.

### **18. Talk about mental health**

If you're open to it, try talking about mental health with a coworker. Sharing how you feel can provide relief, and also create an open culture that enables everyone to express how they feel and improve on it collectively.

### **19. Join the Reignite Project**

If you find yourself feeling stressed or close to burnout regularly, sign up for free to [The Reignite Project](#). This is a Calmer-led project, created to support 600,000 entrepreneurs and business teams in reducing stress and burnout by 2023.

### **20. Book a massage or spa treatment**

While it may seem a little indulgent, a massage or trip to the spa can provide welcome relief and relaxation in the mind and body.

### **21. Practice yoga - at your desk**

No matter your flexibility, you could take a few minutes to try practicing yoga at your desk and see the benefits in reduced physical and mental tension.

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