

# Stress Relief Techniques



In the fast-paced world of election administration, stress can often be a constant companion. However, it is crucial for election officials to have tools at their disposal for quick stress relief. These are a few techniques that can help you manage stress effectively, even during busy workdays.

## BENEFITS

- Reduce stress levels
- Enhance focus and decision-making
- Improve overall well-being

## QUICK EXERCISE/ACTIVITY

### Deep Breathing Exercise

- 1 Find a quiet space to sit or stand comfortably.
- 2 Close your eyes and take a deep breath in through your nose for a count of four.
- 3 Hold your breath for a count of four.
- 4 Exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of four.
- 5 Repeat this cycle for a few minutes, focusing on your breath.

### Use Your Senses

Exploring sensory experiences can quickly relieve stress. Many of these techniques incorporate more than one sense, and can be practiced just about anywhere. These examples are just a starting point; find what works for you.

#### Sight

- Look at a cherished photo or favorite memento.
- Use a plant or flowers to enliven your workspace.
- Enjoy the beauty of nature: a garden, a park, or your own backyard.
- Surround yourself with colors that lift your spirits.
- Close your eyes and picture a place that feels peaceful and rejuvenating.

#### Sound

- Sing or play a favorite song.
- Listen to calming or uplifting music.
- Listen to nature sounds - crashing waves, the wind rustling the trees, birds singing, etc.
- Hang wind chimes near an open window.

### Smell

- Light a scented candle or burn some incense.
- Experiment with different essential oils.
- Smell some flowers.
- Enjoy the fresh air outdoors.
- Spritz on your favorite perfume or cologne.

### Taste

- Chew a piece of gum.
- Indulge in a small piece of dark chocolate.
- Sip a steaming cup of coffee or tea or a refreshing cold drink.
- Enjoy a healthy, crunchy snack (celery, carrots, trail mix, etc.)

### Touch

- Wrap yourself in a warm blanket.
- Hold a comforting object such as a favorite memento or stress ball.
- Give yourself a hand or neck massage.
- Wear clothing that feels soft against your skin.

### Movement

- Run in place or jump up and down.
- Dance.
- Stretch or roll your head in circles.
- Go for a short walk.
- Squeeze a stress ball.

## Tips for Incorporation

- Practice this deep breathing exercise for just five minutes whenever you feel stressed or overwhelmed.
- Start and/or end team meetings with a deep breathing exercise.
- Use a mobile app or set reminders to help you remember to take these quick stress-relief breaks.
- Take a five-minute walk to clear your head and help you refocus or reset priorities.
- Practice these exercises when you feel you may be heading towards a moment of crisis - such as increased anxiety or a panic attack.

## Additional Resources

For more stress-relieving tips and information, check out The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website on [Emotional Well-Being](#).

## CONCLUSION

Even a few minutes of deep breathing can go a long way in managing stress and improving your well-being. Make this a regular part of your routine to keep stress at bay.