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Think Outside The Box

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[Home](#) > Technique 5: Yoga

Technique 5: Yoga

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Stop! Yoga Time

We've considered a few techniques and methods of managing everyday stress. Let's now shift our attention to a more practical, day-to-day way to deal with stress - yoga.

It's not necessary to fork out money for a monthly yoga studio membership or buy suitably stretchy yoga pants to enjoy the benefits of this ancient and highly relaxing art. Yoga improves flexibility, boosts bodily awareness and enhances your feelings of wellbeing. And you can do it right now!

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The Best Time to Start Is Now!

First, take a moment to find your breath. Take a few exaggerated breaths in and out, feeling the oxygen as it spreads to each and every corner of your lungs. Feel it entering into your nostrils; note its temperature; listen carefully to the almost imperceptible sound it makes as it does so.

Connect Your Mind and Body

Next, you're going to pretend you're not a stressed person sitting on a computer, but rather a tall and majestic oak tree with the wind in its leaves. Inhale deeply and bring as much air as possible into the very tops of your lungs. When you feel you can hold no more, take in one more breath, just in case. Stretch your hands up above you, remembering to loosen and relax the shoulders. Reach up as tall as you possibly can and then let the head slowly tilt backwards, stretching the front of your neck. Now, gradually move into a back bend where you lift up and back as far as possible, stretching and extending the spine. Hold for a few moments, then repeat (feels good, doesn't it?).

Balance Yourself Out

Everything in life is in balance, and you should be too. So for your next move, gently tip the chin forward towards the chest while you imagine the base of your spine pushing up towards the ceiling. Feel the stretch all down the back of your neck and maintain your deep, relaxed breathing as you do.

Concentrate on Your Body

Let's not forget about those shoulders! Next, push your chair back and away from the desk and perch on the edge. Lean forward, reach your arms straight out in front of you and touch the desk with your fingertips. Imagine yourself as flat and straight as possible, the line from the base of your spine to the tips of your fingers laying horizontally. You can drop the head a little as you stretch out those shoulders from a long day of hunching in front of a screen.

Activate With a Twist

Next, try a gentle twist. Sitting upright in your chair again, slowly rotate the entire torso to one side, looking back over your shoulder and holding the armrest of your chair. Don't merely twist your shoulders, but activate your entire core to twist. Breathe deeply and then repeat on the other side.

The Final Stretch

Lastly, stretch out the back of the legs and release the spine by standing up for a refreshing stretch. Drop forward to touch your feet to the ground (or as close as you can get!) and keep the spine relaxed. There's no need to brace or lock your knees, but do push for a stretch. Breathe deeply and then move a little more into the stretch before coming back up again.

If you like, now's the time to explain to any confused colleagues what on earth you're up to.

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