



OFF THE TOP OF MY HEAD!

ExecuCoach360 Newsletter

"Finding Your Direction is Only the Beginning"

Holidays + Stress = Relaxation Strategies

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Here we are already in the month of November. Whether you look forward to the holidays or not, one thing is for sure; stress begins to creep in around the beginning of November and is in full force by the time Thanksgiving arrives. This seems like a perfect time to introduce relaxation strategies. I hope you will find these tips useful and helpful as you face the bustle and hustle of the upcoming holiday season.

There are hundreds of ways one can reduce stress. The challenge is recognizing the triggers. These examples are simple and well worth the time.

Conscious Breathing – When people feel stressed and anxiety builds, they discover that they are taking shallow and quick breaths. Only the uppermost part of the lungs is filling with air, bringing in less oxygen. This causes more adrenaline to be released, which leads to increased anxiety and less oxygen. Breathing from the diaphragm means that breaths are slower, deeper and fuller. Your abdomen fills when inhaling and falls during exhale. Refresh your breathing by doing the following (1):

1. Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor, hands resting on your legs.
2. Inhale through your nose, consciously allowing your breathing to regulate itself, until you begin to feel your abdomen expand.
3. Take a slow breath, imagining your lungs filling with air. Count slowly from 1 to 4, keeping your shoulders and stomach relaxed.
4. Exhale slowly from your nose, counting from 1 to 4 so that on the count of 4 you have exhaled completely.
5. Continue this slow, deep breathing for 3-5 minutes or longer.

Thought Provoking Question:

"Do you usually make a special effort to thank someone who does you a favor? How do you react when you are not thanked for going out of your way?"

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6. As you breathe, notice how your back, shoulders, abdomen and legs feel. Focus your attention on your breathing; if your thoughts begin to wander bring your attention back to the breathing and your counting from 1 to 4 on the inhale and again 1 to 4 on the exhale.

Mini Stretching Exercises

While doing these stretches, keep your jaw relaxed and keep breathing easily. (2).

Shoulder Role – Raise your shoulders as if you are trying to touch your ears. Move your shoulders back; then let them drop. Up, back, down and around. Do five of these.

Head Rolls – Gently roll your head in a circle three times around to the right and three to the left. Roll slowly and gently. If you hear your muscles and bones cracking or popping ease off.

Desk Stretch – Slide your chair back from the desk far enough so when you lean forward your head is just short of the desk. Then put your arms on the desk with elbows just off it. Lean forward with your head below the desk and feel the upper arm, shoulders and upper back stretch.

Sitting Side Bender – Interlace your fingers behind your neck so both elbows are sticking out to the side. Gently lean to your left; back to your right. Do this three or four times, feeling your neck, sides and lower back stretch.

I hope you have enjoyed these tips and that you begin applying them. Make the time to eat right, exercise and take time for yourself. Remember, we bring stress on and we are responsible for the level of stress we create.

Quote of the Month

"Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day is the rest we take between two deep breaths."

- Etty Hillesum

Did you know?

That this newsletter has 652 words and should take 4 minutes or less to read? A small price for knowledge.

(1). Energy of Leadership – Kaplan
(2). Relaxation Strategies – University of Minnesota.

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