

## Stress Care = Self Care

Stress is a natural part of our everyday lives. If we do not manage it properly, it can accumulate to unhealthy levels. Stress is the cause of many diseases and is a factor in many others. It may be emotional or mental in origin, or it may have a physical cause, i.e.: poor posture, injuries, improper exercise, or job functions. No matter the origin, it is expressed in our physical bodies. Stress may bring headaches, anxiety, aching muscles, digestive problems, depression, insomnia, as well as more serious disorders. We can use massage to relieve these damaging effects. Massage is “drugless therapy,” a natural way to reduce pain and stress and enhance wellness. Massage strengthens the circulatory, immune, digestive and other body systems. To enhance a sports program, massage increases flexibility and performance and reduces the risk of injury. Last but not least, through the loving touch of massage, we can show our caring concern for one another.

### Five-Minute Stress Break

1. Breathe slowly from abdomen, eyes closed, X3.
2. “Monster Face.”
3. Squeeze neck up and down X3, each hand, then 3-way stretches.
4. “Big Circle”: Stretch arms out in front, up, down, back.
5. “Little Circles”: Tighten shoulders and roll back X3.
6. Stretch each leg out, bend to chest, then across.
7. Arch sideways, backwards, melt forward.
8. Breathe and tell yourself something good about yourself!
9. Sit up and shake out hands.

### Knead A Friend

1. Squeeze shoulders X3, use hands or forearms.
2. Squeeze neck X3 with each hand.
3. Shake back, one side at a time.
4. Chop back lightly, stay off spine and “Brush Off”.
5. Squeeze hand, arm.
6. “Therapeutic” hug!

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