

Rapid Unwind

Quick ways to calm your nerves—when yelling at the top of your lungs simply isn't appropriate. **By Marygrace Taylor**

Just Pen It!

A few minutes of freehand drawing can calm you better than an adult coloring book. It's more liberating, explains Marygrace Berberian, LCSW, a clinical assistant professor in art therapy at New York University. Start with a random line or shape and allow your hand to move freely.



Get Motional

When the going gets tough, the tough get moving: Exercise triggers the release of endorphins, which relax you and improve your mood. For a quick fix, try running up a flight or two of stairs, recommends Kelley Vargo, MPH, a certified health coach and exercise scientist with the American Council on Exercise. Victory fist pump once you reach the top—completely optional.

Wear a Soothing Scent

Notes like vanilla or lavender can mellow you out. "Smell is connected to the part of your brain that controls emotions," says Frauke Galia, senior director of fragrance and fragrance products at Prolitec, a scent marketing company.



Keep Your Head Down

While seated at a desk or table, lean in, placing your forearms on the surface, elbows bent in at 45 degrees, and rest your head on top of your arms. Breathe slowly and deeply for 1 to 2 minutes. This miracle move calms your nervous system by regulating the release of stress hormones, says Tiffany Cruikshank, LAC, founder of Yoga Medicine and author of *Meditate Your Weight*.



Calm with Down

Got a feather in the craft drawer? NYU Langone Medical Center Integrative Health Practitioner Amy Eberhardt, MPH, recommends holding it in your hand, taking a minute to enjoy the color, shape and texture. Slowly inhale, and as you exhale, direct your breath toward the feather and observe its movement. Repeat three times and note how you feel now. Calmer, right? If you don't have a feather, try a leaf or a blade of grass.



Do a (Feel) Good Deed

Giving to others actually yields a burst of the stress-calming hormone oxytocin, says Acacia Parks, PhD, chief scientist at Happify, a website and app for improving your emotional well-being. "Pick a few easy, inexpensive actions during the day, like making a cup of tea for a coworker who's having a rough morning," she says.