

How to Relax the Body

Our bodies tend to get battered every day, especially if we're stressed out, not sleeping enough, and rarely prioritize rest.

Right now, you might be wondering, *Yes, that's true, but...I have zero time to rest. I have responsibilities. I'm already behind on everything and the new year only just started.*

But resting doesn't have to be a significant part of your day. It just has to be part of it.

After all, skipping self-care can spark burnout. Which is precisely how I felt a few months ago: physically, emotionally, and mentally exhausted. Which is why I decided to slow down and incorporate more breaks into my day, particularly in the evening.

Even though it's obvious now, I realized that my unsustainable pace wasn't helping me be productive; it was only making life needlessly hard.

Maybe you, too, can take a look at your schedule and carve out small moments to rest your body (which, of course, also helps to relax your mind). During those moments, instead of scrolling social media, incorporate one or two genuinely relaxing techniques.

For example, here are five simple, quick, and calming practices from the new book *Fuel Your Fire: 200 Ways to Instantly Beat Burnout and Reignite Your Passion* by wellness coach Samantha Acton:

1. Reach for the sky. According to Acton, this stretch improves flexibility, releases tension, and even helps you to feel open-minded and openhearted. Start by standing hip-distance apart with your arms at your sides. Breathe in through your nose as you raise your arms above your head with your palms up. Let your palms meet. Next turn your palms to the front, reaching up as high as you can (maybe even on your tippy toes). Hold here for 10 seconds as you breathe in and out through your nose. Then release the stretch, keeping your palms facing up until they reach your sides. Take another deep breath through your nose. Repeat this stretch for at least three times.

2. Twist. Lie on your back with your arms at your sides and your feet hip-distance apart. Bring one knee to your chest, and using your opposite hand, gently move it to the other side of your body. As you twist, make sure that both shoulder blades are still pressed to the floor. If you'd like a deeper stretch, turn your head to the opposite side. Hold this stretch for 30 seconds to 2 minutes. Then repeat on the other side.

3. Rub your temples. Acton notes that "applying pressure to the temples stimulates blood flow in the brain and relaxes the forehead, which builds energy and focus and banishes stress." You can even put an essential oil on your fingers for extra energizing or calming benefits. For example, peppermint and lemon are stimulating, while lavender is soothing.

4. Use a stress ball. There are numerous ways you can use a stress ball to help you relax. For example, simply squeeze it in your hand; roll it in your hand; toss the ball from one hand to another; or hold the ball between two fingers and squeeze it.



5. Practice alternate nostril breathing. Start with your right hand: Fold in your index and middle fingers toward your palm, leaving your thumb, ring finger, and pinky finger extended. Using your right thumb, close your right nostril, and slowly inhale through your left nostril. Next using your right ring finger, close your left nostril and release your right nostril. Exhale through the right nostril. Repeat this breathing practice six times.

We can relax our bodies in many ways. Sometimes, simply sitting on the couch for several minutes with our feet up can feel amazing. So can closing our eyes and massaging our tense necks or tired-from-typing hands. So can sinking into our chairs and listening to a few favorite songs.

Don't neglect yourself. You deserve rest.

And that rest doesn't have to be time consuming or complicated. Even 5 minutes of genuine downtime can make a meaningful difference.

Why not try to see exactly how?

If you're feeling stuck in your relationships or personal growth or just struggling to find the "why" for your life, I'd love to share what coaching can do for you. Let's chat about how to honour your voice and bring it forward – what gets in the way, and how to start integrating your voice in healthy ways. Start somewhere, even if it is a whisper.

Schedule a complimentary 20-minute breakthrough session today! Book now.