If you want to lower your stress level in a matter of minutes, these techniques are all relatively fast-acting. Use them as needed to feel better quickly; practice them regularly over time and gain even greater benefits.

- Breathing Exercises
- Meditation
- Reframing With a Sense of Humor
- Music
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Yoga
- Exercise
- Guided Imagery
- Journaling
- Cognitive Restructuring
- Walking
- Calling a good friend
- Savoring a cup of coffee or tea
- Watching a comedy
- Reading part of a book you enjoy
- Playing with a pet

Adopting the right attitude can convert a negative stress into a positive one.

-Hans Selye
Avoid Unnecessary Stress

Not all stress can be avoided, and it's not healthy to avoid situations that need to be addressed. However, a number of stressors can be eliminated by:

- Increasing awareness and identifying stressors
- Learning how to say “no”
- Avoiding people who stress you out
- Taking control of your environment
- Avoiding hot-button topics
- Trimming down your to-do list
  - Remaining optimistic
  - Setting realistic goals
  - Working toward goals the smart way

Adjust to the Stressor

If you can’t change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressors and regain a sense of control by amending your expectations and attitude:

- Reframe problems
- Look at the big picture
- Adjust your expectations and attitudes
- Focus on the positive
- Use humor and distraction
- Engage in mindfulness and stress relief
- Problem solve
- Use encouraging self-talk

Accept what You Can’t Change

Some sources of stress are unavoidable. Acceptance may be difficult but more beneficial in the long run:

- Don’t try to control the uncontrollable
- Look for the upside
- Share your feelings
- Learn to forgive
- Let go of stressful thoughts
- Let go of anger

Make Time for Fun and

You can also reduce stress by nurturing yourself. Increase your resistance to stress by making these a part of your routine:

- Exercise regularly
- Eat a healthy diet
- Reduce caffeine and sugar
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs
- Get enough sleep
- Spend time in nature
- Write in your journal
- Set aside relaxation time
- Connect with others
- Do something you enjoy every day

The Counseling Center

Marshak Science Building, Rm. J-15
160 Convent Avenue
New York, NY 10031

Phone: (212) 650-8222
Fax: (212) 650-8227
E-mail: counseling@ccny.cuny.edu