BREATHE
Deep breathing can reduce anxiety and disrupt repetitive or negative thoughts by focusing awareness on the present moment. Changing your breathing can shift your mood and perspective.

Try taking a deep breath in through the nose for 3 seconds... hold for 2 seconds... breathe out through the mouth for 6 seconds...

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Laughter jolts us out of our usual state of mind and can eliminate negative feelings. As a result, humor can be a powerful antidote to burn-out. Hearty belly-laughs exercise muscles, stimulate circulation, decrease stress hormones, and increase your immune system’s defenses, making laughter one of the most beneficial stress reduction techniques you can practice.

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Meditate
Meditation is the process of tuning out the world and turning your attention inward. Focus your attention on your breath, a word or phrase, or an image. Observe without judgement any distracting thoughts that arise as you “tune in;” release them as you exhale. Return your attention inward. Once you acquire the skill, mindfulness meditation can be done anywhere, for a few minutes or longer when possible. Learn more stress tips: www.gannett.cornell.edu
Visualization: By mentally rehearsing a task you want to master, you can achieve many of the same benefits you might from actual, physical practice. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Imagine yourself acing the task (e.g., taking an exam, having an important conversation). Now, focus on how your success feels (jazzed, relieved, satisfied, smart, etc.). Stay with that feeling for a while.

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Listen To Music
Music can energize or relax you. Studies show it can lower blood pressure and respiration, creating a calming effect. **Be conscious of how music makes you feel. Choose what you need at the moment** (e.g., to lighten a heavy mood; to help you relax and fall asleep). Have fun discovering new music: attend performances; make your own (sing, drum, etc.). Enjoy sharing it all with your friends.

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RELAX YOUR BODY
Progressive muscle relaxation systematically relieves bodily tension and helps you feel more relaxed within minutes. Starting with your toes and working your way up to your head, slowly tighten... hold... and then relax your various muscle groups (e.g., feet, legs, abdomen, buttocks, shoulders, arms, hands, face). As you release, think to yourself “these muscles are now relaxed.” You may notice a feeling of heaviness as tension leaves your body.

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Exercise is a healthy way to release pent-up energy, anger, or anxiety. Just 30 minutes of moderate exercise releases endorphins, the body’s natural mood enhancers. Any physical movement can help relieve stress. Try walking, running, hiking, dancing, swimming, skating, shooting hoops, or working out at the gym.

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Power naps, most effective in the afternoon, can make you more alert, reduce stress, and boost cognitive functioning. Find a suitable place to relax, take a few deep breaths, and focus your attention on sleep. Enjoy giving your body this time to recharge. To avoid feeling groggy afterward, limit your power nap to 20-30 minutes.

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EAT WELL
Eat well. Quality food, eaten at regular intervals, provides the fuel your body and mind need to be productive throughout the day. It also provides the energy needed to buffer life’s daily stressors. Choose a variety of food—colors, textures, tastes—at meals. Combine foods (e.g., an apple and a piece of cheese) to create a high-energy snack. Take time to enjoy your food: notice the flavor and feel of each bite.

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Play! Enjoy a pleasurable, no-pressure activity. Being “child-like” (different from “childish”) allows you to explore, to experience your feelings in the moment, to release your tension in a creative way, and to rebound from disappointments with greater ease. Whether it’s finger painting, jumping in leaves, or reading a book “just for fun,” take time to experience the joy of play every day.

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