

## 7 Ways to Defeat Stress

When we're dealing with angry guests or hairy services, our nervous systems gear up into "fight or flight" mode. The brain releases stress hormones into our bloodstream, muscles tense, breaths shorten, and heart rate increases. Even after service is over, our bodies may remain in this stressful state. Managing this stress means letting our bodies know that the "danger" is gone - and gearing down into the "rest and digest" function of the nervous system. Here are some activities that are proven to resolve your body's physiological stress cycle and gear down.

### **Deep Belly Breathing**

Changing your breathing patterns from the quick, shallow ones your body associates with stress into the long, deep breaths of relaxation are a surefire way to lower stress levels. Big breath in for 4 seconds, out for 8. A few breaths like this and you'll be in a different state of mind within a minute or two.

### **Crying**

Sometimes you've just gotta cry it all out. Just make sure you're in a place where you feel psychologically safe to do so.

### **Laughter**

Nothing feels better than this - that deep down, scrape the bottom of the pan kind of laughter. If it combines with a little crying, all the better! Don't hold back!

### **Physical Activity**

Run some stairs. Do a hundred squats or jumping jacks. Let this lead to deep belly breathing - sweat it out and your body will soften in no time.

### **Affection**

A 30 second hug with somebody you trust will fix many of life's problems.

### **Social Connection**

Experiencing feelings of social belonging is the greatest long-term prescription for burnout. Combine this with laughter and affection and everything is right with the world.

### **Creative Expression**

Creativity requires a relaxed state of mind. Practicing creative hobbies are a great remedy for stressful shifts.