# 5 Workplace Stress Busters to Start Right Now

## 1. Mindful breathing

**Breathing is the best way to address stress in both the mind and the body.** Because it's an automatic bodily process it's linked to our physical selves. But because we can choose to control our breathing to some extent, it's also linked to our mental well being.

**Take 30 seconds to focus on slow deep breaths before starting a new task.** Taking focused, deeper breaths in and out has a tendency to straighten our posture as well.

## 2. Stretching

Stress affects each person slightly differently, but there are patterns. **Common areas to feel stress in the body are shoulders, neck, head, upper back, lower back, and stomach.**

Depending on the type of work you do, your body will tend to tense up in static postures. **For computer workers, this means shoulders get more hunched**, chests cave in, and head and neck gets stretched out towards the keyboard or screen.

**Workers who spend most of the day on their feet will tend to feel stress in their low backs.** This comes from a fatigued posture where the body tries to relax as much as it can. But because of the upright posture, weight tends to settle unnaturally around the pelvis, hips and base of the spine.

Whatever posture your body is holding throughout the day, counteract it with some gentle, sustained stretches.

## 3. Moments of zen

Every office has some random sound that happens on a somewhat regular basis. Maybe it's the elevator dinging down the hall, the front door opening and closing, a filing cabinet drawer that squeaks every time it's opened...or some other sound unique to your office space.

**Use these little triggers as a reminder to come back to the present moment.** If you can, stop what you're doing for 2 seconds, take a breath, and notice what your posture is doing.

That's it. Then return to your task at hand. **By breaking up the day with these little moments of zen, you'll end up much less stressed at the end of the day.**

## 4. Turn off notifications

Where multitasking was once lauded as an accomplishment, more research is showing that **multitasking is not an effective way to produce quality work.**

When focusing on a project, turn off as many notifications as you can get away with -- or at least make it slightly harder to check them. **It can be as simple as minimizing your email browser so you don't see each time you get a new email.**

Unless you're anticipating receiving some information from someone else, you're often better off focusing for 15-30 minutes at a time before checking in on your notifications. **If something is going to burn down in that time, people will find other ways of getting in touch with you.**

## 5. Get outside

At least once a day, rain or shine, try to get outside for a few minutes. **Getting out of the florescent lights and into some fresh air can be a great way to hit the restart button.**

Taking some time for a quick walk, even if it's just around the parking lot, is beneficial as well. A quick lap around the building, or if you're lucky, around some kind of trees or grass, will help you focus better when you return to your work.