

STOP Stress in Its Tracks



Add these three techniques to your “Stress Management Toolbox” to reduce stress and create healthier patterns.

1. **STOP:** a simple formula to calm a stressful situation

- **Stop.**
- **Take three deep breaths and smile.**
- **Observe your mind and body, and become present in the moment.**
- **Proceed with awareness, compassion, and thoughtful action (or inaction).**

2. **Progressive muscle relaxation:** a tense-and-release method that teaches you to relax at will

First tense and then relax specific muscle groups, starting with your head and working your way down to your toes or vice versa.

- **Tension:** Focus on a target muscle group. Take a deep breath, contract and squeeze the muscles, and hold for about 5 seconds. Make your muscle tension deliberate but gentle.
- **Relaxation:** Exhale and ease up on the tension until the muscle relaxes.

3. **Deep breathing:** connects your mind and body, quiets your thoughts, and eases worrying

- Place one hand on your abdomen with your other hand on your chest.
- Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into your abdomen. Your abdomen should expand out as far as is comfortable.
- Hold your breath for a few seconds.
- Exhale gently and slowly through your mouth while pursing your lips. Relax.
- Repeat.



To learn more, visit [bcbswny.com](https://www.bcbswny.com)
or call a health coach at
1-877-878-8785 (option 2).

