

# Creating Space in Your Day

## By Sara Hurd, CFCC

The pace of life seems to have increased tenfold in the past few years. With technology ever present in our lives, keeping us tethered to our to-dos, it seems like our days can be harried and frenzied. Remember, however, that the pace of life is a choice. The events of your day don't need to control you.



### **The Price of Stress**

Slowing down the pace of life is essential to well-being. Stress has a direct correlation to physical ailments such as high blood pressure, heart disease, ulcers, muscle aches and pains and general fatigue. Stress can even increase the size of your waistline! At the end of a stressful day, how do your shoulders feel? If not released, the tension will build throughout the day until you feel like a tightly wound spring. No wonder we feel like we need to “unwind” at the end of the day.

Instead of winding up during the day and then unwinding at night, create space throughout the day and you'll be looser and more relaxed.

### **Take Frequent Space Breaks to Relieve Stress**

The key to creating space is consistency and frequency. Take several “space breaks” throughout your day for the greatest impact. They don't have to be lengthy - even 30 seconds can have a positive impact.

Here are several ideas for creating space:

- Set an alarm on the hour. When your alarm goes off, tune in to how your shoulders feel and consciously relax and loosen them. Alternately, put it on the top of your task list and don't check it off until the end of the day. That way, whenever you go back to your task list, you'll be reminded to relax your shoulders.
- Take a five minute walk around the building or even outside. Your quick run to the bathroom does not count. Vary your pace - leisurely to briskly.
- Walk outside and get a breath of fresh air. Notice your surroundings.
- Take a moment while in your office chair to close your eyes, stretch out your legs and wiggle your toes.
- Close your eyes and visualize an ideal location. Even 10 seconds does wonders. Take a deep breath as you open your eyes again.
- Concentrate on your breath. Take a deep breath in and notice your ribs and your belly expand. Exhale slowly.
- With your palms to the front, extend your arms out to each side like you're about to give someone a huge hug. Feel your chest expand.

- Interlace your fingers and with the tops of your hands up, straighten your arms to the ceiling. Sit up as straight as you can and feel the space in your spine.
- Gently yank on sections of your hair to release tension in your scalp. Try this same technique to relieve minor headaches.
- Give yourself a mini-massage. Rub your temples, ears, eyebrows and back of the neck at the base of your head and behind the ears. Try also massaging each hand and finger, gently applying pressure at the top of each shoulder right next to the neck, or massaging your scalp.

Any mental or physical break from whatever you're doing will do. If you take several "space breaks" throughout the day, you'll be more effective when you get back to what you were doing. Plus, you'll be relaxed at the end of the day and able to focus on what's important to you rather than trying to recuperate from the stress and tension of your day.

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