



CLASS 5 | DE-STRESS YOURSELF

Teaches techniques your students can use to better manage stress.

TBH FOCUS

 **KEEP EMOTIONAL BALANCE**

SKILLS WORKED

     

SBBT

 **PAIR UP**

YOU WILL NEED

- *Now Do It!* worksheets and *TBH Takeaway* handouts, enough for each student. Distribute to distance learners ahead of class
- Video conferencing technology if modifying for virtual delivery
-  **Expert Opportunity!** Invite a colleague trained in stress management to co-lead this class.



WELCOME TO CLASS!

- Welcome any new students using the *Welcome to the TBH Course* introduction.
- Introduce today's class.

Today's topic is "De-Stress Yourself." Our TBH Focus is the "Keep Emotional Balance" action point. Research shows while stress can take a toll on our cognitive fitness, there are simple, practical things we can do to lower the impact stress has on our thinking and well-being.

We will be working on the following thinking skills today:

 Perception
  Attention
  Nimbleness
 Verbal Skills
  Memory
  Problem Solving



TBH LET'S GET IT STARTED!

5 MINUTES

- Lead this upbeat, seated warm-up to build focus, energy, and get everyone ready to learn.
- Encourage class to count along and support one another.
- See the [TBH Let's Get It Started! playlist](#) for suggested music to set the pace of your workout.
- See the course introduction for a fully scripted version of this workout.
- Mute distance learners to avoid noisy distractions.



TBH LET'S GET IT STARTED!

CONTINUED

We are going to begin with *TBH Let's Get it Started!* Being physically active is great for our brains. This quick warmup is a great way to get focused, build energy and get us ready to learn. We'll do this right at our seats at the beginning of every class. Just watch what I do and follow along!

FEET GET STARTED!

- ▶ Tap toes on both feet, up and down. 10 repetitions. Count together 1 to 10.
- ▶ Alternate toe taps. 10 repetitions. Count backward together 10 to 1.

LEGS GET STARTED!

- ▶ Stamp feet on the ground, alternating feet. Make "noise" with group.
- ▶ Gently kick legs out from the knee, alternating legs. 10 repetitions. Count together from A to J.
- ▶ March in place, alternating legs. 10 repetitions. If your class is physically able to march in place safely while standing, you may choose that option. Count backwards from 20 by 2's (20, 18, 16...)

ARMS GET STARTED!

- ▶ Gently shake arms, open and close hands.
- ▶ Circle wrists a few times in clockwise and counterclockwise.
- ▶ Hold arms straight out in front, shoulder level, palms facing down. Slowly lower both hands to thighs and then raise them back to shoulder level. 5 repetitions. Count by 2's (2, 4, 6, 8, 10).
- ▶ Shrug shoulders up and down, with hands on knees. 5 repetitions. Count backwards from 5 to 1.

VOICES GET STARTED!

- ▶ Say "OHHHHHHHHHHH." Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds.
- ▶ Say "EHHHHHHHHHHH." Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds.
- ▶ Say "AHHHHHHHHHHH." Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds.
- ▶ Say "OH – EH – AH." Hold each sound for a few seconds. 3 repetitions.
- ▶ Say "The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue." Repeat this famous acting voice exercise with the class, focusing on articulation and participation. 3 repetitions.

BREATH GETS STARTED!

- ▶ Slow focus to bring awareness to sitting still in chair.
- ▶ Take a deep breath in through the nose.
- ▶ Exhale out through the mouth.
- ▶ Give selves big hug, wrapping arms across waist and squeezing gently, as able.
- ▶ Thank selves and send some "TBH love" to our brains!

Great job, everyone! We are started up and ready to go!



BRAIN PLAY | BREATH COUNTS

5 MINUTES

- Lead this quick cognitive warm up to build attention, processing speed, nimbleness and other cognitive skills, as well as group connection.
- Have students practice rhythmic breathing while you count beats for the class. Make sure to count the “beats” in a moderately paced, steady rhythm.
- You can change the “beats” for each round of breathing as you lead this warm up, with “counts” ranging anywhere from three to ten “beats.” Do as many rounds as time allows.
- Encourage distance learners to follow along at home.

Now let’s do our “Brain Play” called “Breath Counts.” Controlling the rhythm of our breath can calm us in a stressful moment. Think of it as stress “first aid.” First, let’s all get comfortable. Now, as I count to five, take a nice relaxed breath in (1,2,3,4,5). Good. Now let’s hold our breath gently, for the count of three (1,2,3). Now let’s release our breath, gently again, to the count of five (1,2,3,4,5). How was that? Now let’s try that again. We will do a few rounds, changing the “breath counts” as we go. Ready?

Excellent brain playing, everyone!



LEARN THE TBH SCIENCE

5 MINUTES

- Present the science behind this class.
- Allow for brief discussion of the science with your students.

Now let’s talk about how we can “de-stress” ourselves.

Research shows that there are many simple and effective lifestyle strategies for reducing the “dis-stress” we feel when situations feel out of our control. This is great news for our everyday thinking and long-term brain health, which can be negatively impacted by stress, especially chronic stress.

What can we do? The good news is that any activity that balances a stress reaction can work. This can be something as simple as a breathing exercise, like the “Breath Counts” we just did, or our weekly “TBH Take a Breath” practice. We may find that getting regular exercise helps us feel less stressed. We may practice self-talk to make us feel relaxed or find that talking to others helps. Many of us may use prayer or meditation to balance stress. Or taking part in a group activity, like a choir or art club. Or getting a massage or taking a bath.

What is important is that we all find something that helps us feel more in control and calmer. And that we have something we can use in the moment, like deep breathing. As well as something we do each day to better balance ongoing stress, like weekly lunch dates with friends or a meditation practice.

What are some of the things you do to help yourself “de-stress?”



NOW DO IT!

15 MINUTES

- Break your class into pairs of two or three persons.
- Lead your class through the 2 class worksheets, following the directions on each worksheet.
- Have students work in their small groups to practice the stress reduction strategies taught on each worksheet.
- When repeating this class, remind returning students their responses may have changed, and to complete the worksheets for how they feel currently.
- Allow students to take their worksheets home to deepen their practice of stress reduction.
- For virtual delivery, modify workout to do “All Together.” Adjust scripting accordingly.

Now we are going to “pair up” to practice different ways we can reduce stress and create more calm for ourselves. Let’s do that now.

I’m going to give each of you a worksheet. We will go through the directions at the top of the worksheet together. Then you will try the strategy taught on the sheet with your partner. We will try two different strategies today. We will just have a few minutes to try each one, so be sure to take turns.

As we try the strategies, think about which ones you would like to keep practicing on you own to balance stress.

TBH De-Stress Yourself Worksheet 1. Put on the BRAKES. Offers a simple six-step strategy to immediately diffuse a stressful situation.

TBH De-Stress Yourself Worksheet 2. Breathe into Your Heart. Teaches a simple yet powerful visualization strategy for stress reduction.



TBH TAKEAWAY

10 MINUTES

- Share this brief wrap-up to end the workout.
- Distribute or email the handouts for students to continue working on their own.
- Ask students to share one thing they will “take away” from today’s class.

I enjoyed spending time together today and learning how we can better manage our stress. Research shows that stress can have negative impact on our daily thinking, our memory, and our long-term brain vitality and overall well-being. However, as we have seen today, there are many ways we can “de-stress” and minimize the impact negative feelings can have on our brain health.

Here are some handouts you can use on your own to continue building your stress reduction practice. The first outlines the “TBH Take a Breath” practice we do each week, so you can keep trying it on your own each day. Another lists a number of stress reducing strategies. And, there’s one that asks you to think about 3 ways you will “de-stress yourself.”

Let’s each share one thing you will try after today to better manage our stress.



Let's give each other a nice round of applause for finding ways to take care of our brains and of ourselves today!

TBH TAKE A BREATH

5 MINUTES



- Lead this signature relaxation and affirmation exercise to close class.
- See the [TBH Take a Breath playlist](#) for suggested music to set the pace of your workout.
- See the course introduction for a fully scripted version of this workout.
- Mute distance learners to avoid distracting noises.

Let's wrap up with "TBH Take a Breath." Being mindful of our breath and sharing some positive thoughts is a wonderful way to acknowledge what we've learned together before we go back to our day. Research also shows that these kinds of exercises help us focus better and even learn more effectively.

- ▶ *Have students get comfortable, resting both feet flat on the floor, hands resting in their laps.*
- ▶ *Have students close their eyes and keep them gently closed.*
- ▶ *Ask students to focus their attention on their breathing, noticing the rate and rhythm of their breath. Allow them to focus on their natural breathing for a few moments.*
- ▶ *Instruct students to begin rhythmic breathing. Ask them to inhale slowly and deeply through their nostrils, breathing gently into their chest and belly. Then ask them to exhale slowly through their lips, slowing the rate and rhythm of their breath.*
- ▶ *Have students continue rhythmic breathing, instructing them to continue to focus on gently and slowly inhaling and exhaling, allowing their attention to simply "ride" the wave of their breath. Allow them to focus on rhythmic breathing for several moments.*
- ▶ *Offer the following positive affirmation statements below in a calm, slow voice. Invite students to simply listen, repeat the phrase silently to themselves, or to think about what each statement means to them.*

My body is relaxed.

I am grateful for feeling calm.

I am grateful for feeling I can take care of myself.

I am grateful for feeling supported.

I take this time and this breath for me.

- ▶ Pause for several moments.
- ▶ End the exercise by inviting your students to bring their awareness back to the room, gently opening their eyes and becoming more aware of the room and of each other.
- ▶ Invite them to end practice with gratitude for taking a moment for themselves, for the chance to learn together and to connect with each other.



COMING UP NEXT!

2 MINUTES

- Thank students for attending the class.
- Invite students to join you for the next TBH class.

I am so glad we had this time to learn together today. I am grateful that we were able to work together and try different ways we can diffuse stress and create more calm for ourselves.

I look forward to seeing you for our next TBH Brain Workout class. Be sure to bring a friend!



CLASS RESOURCES

Provide your students with the following worksheets for the in-class exercise.

TBH De-Stress Yourself Worksheet 1. Put on the BRAKES. Offers a simple six-step strategy to immediately diffuse a stressful situation.

TBH De-Stress Yourself Worksheet 2. Breathe into Your Heart. Teaches a simple yet powerful visualization strategy for stress reduction.

NOW DO IT! WORKSHEETS

Use these optional worksheets to run your class.

De-Stress Yourself Practice relaxation techniques

TBH TAKEAWAY HANDOUTS

Download and provide your students with the following handouts they can use to better understand stress management.

TBH Take a Breath Practice (Total Brain Health). Provides students with an outline to continue this practice on their own.

Lifestyle Strategies for Reducing Stress (Total Brain Health). Offers different lifestyle strategies to reduce stress, with option to identify what is used already and what may be of interest to try.

Your De-Stress Plan (Total Brain Health). Asks user to identify three ways they can “de-stress.”

5 Things You Should Know About Stress (National Institute on Mental Health). This downloadable two-page flier offers an easy-to-follow guide to understanding and managing stress.