

Six Simple Strategies for Inner Peace

By Connie de Veer

Your imagination, breathing, and moving your body can change your state from stress to peace in surprisingly short order.

1. Yoga Breath of Fire

- Sit or stand comfortably and symmetrically.
- Place one hand on your torso above the waist.
- Pant through your nose rather forcefully, focusing on the exhale, for about 15 – 30 seconds. Stop if you feel like you're tensing up.
- Take one deep, slow breath through your nose and hold it for about a count of 5.
- Slowly release the breath through your mouth for about a count of 10.

2. Tighten/Release

- Tighten your face into a tight ball and hold it for about a count of 3.
- Stretch it wide as you exhale, with eyes wide, and tongue extended as far down your chin as possible. This is called Lion, in yoga.
- Raise your shoulders up to your ears and squeeze as you hold your breath for about a count of 5.
- Quickly release your shoulders and your breath.
- Move through other parts of your body doing the same thing – tighten and hold breath / release and exhale. You can do this with your hands, legs, even your entire body.

3. Morph it

- Sit quietly and breathe through your nose for 1 or 2 minutes.
- Imagine the thing that stresses you as an object or a metaphor. For example:
 - Climbing Mt. Everest
 - Building a castle.
- Now imagine deliberately transforming it into a non-stressful, or even joyful, form. For example:
 - A glowing hot fireball turns to ice and disintegrates into tiny, beautiful snowflakes and ice crystals.
 - Heavy, enormous baggage turns into a flock of butterflies and flies away.

4. Punch

- Imagine what's stressing you as an object (or monster) placed a few feet in front of you. Now punch the daylights out of it, for as long as you need to.

5. Laugh

- Find or call your funniest friend and have a laugh with them.
- Watch a funny movie, TV show, or YouTube video.
- Look at your current stress in a new way. Find the ridiculous, ironic elements of it. Ask yourself how important it will be in 10 years. Will you eventually laugh about it? Start now.

6. Gratitude

- Quickly name 5 things you're grateful for. It can be simple, like "air," or "my imagination."
- Look at the thing that's stressing you out and find at least one thing to be grateful for about it, like "It's teaching me something valuable," or "I'll be deeply fulfilled when I finish this project," etc.