

Taking the Time to Relax

This article has general information and is not meant to replace health guidance specific to any individual. Speak to your healthcare provider before making any changes to your lifestyle.

Living with an autoimmune condition can be challenging, and managing stress is crucial for overall well-being. Here are some **effective relaxation techniques** that can help reduce stress and improve quality of life:



Meditation



Yoga



Breathing exercises



Guided imagery



Meditation

This mind-and-body practice is a well-established relaxation technique to help reduce stress.

Most types of meditation have 4 common elements:

1. A quiet location with few distractions
2. Comfortable postures or poses
3. Intentional focus on a word, object, or your breath
4. An open attitude toward yourself and your environment

Some types of meditation involve movement, while others don't. Talk with your healthcare team to decide what's best for you.

STATIONARY MEDITATION

- Guided imagery
- Mindfulness meditation
- Focused meditation

MOVING MEDITATION

- Yoga
- Tai chi and qigong
- Walking meditation

Relaxation Techniques



Yoga

Yoga combines physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation. It helps improve flexibility, reduce stress, and enhance overall well-being, and it can be particularly beneficial for managing symptoms of autoimmune diseases.

By connecting the mind and body, gentle yoga may:

- Improve concentration
- Have a positive impact on mental health
- Reduces stress

Strike a Pose | An easy yoga pose to start with is Mountain Pose:



1. Stand with your feet side by side and slightly touching.



2. Bring your pressed palms to the center of your chest and stand tall.



3. If you want to switch things up, try this pose with your hands lifted up toward the sky.



Breathing Exercises

Focusing on your breath can help “quiet your mind” and make you feel relaxed. Try this method to help calm your breathing:

- Inhale deeply while inflating your abdomen out
- Hold your breath for a few seconds
- Use your stomach muscles to exhale all of your breath
- Repeat these steps a few times



Guided Imagery

- Throughout guided imagery, a voice directs your attention in a specific way to help relax your mind
- You may be asked to imagine walking through a forest, lying in the grass, or sitting by a beautiful lake
- During these sessions, someone could be there with you to lead you through the exercise, or you could listen to a recording

Other positive relaxation techniques to try: Prioritize responsibilities and say no to new tasks that may overwhelm you. Get moving with light exercises like walking, or take time for creativity with an adult coloring book. Spend time with supportive loved ones, including family, friends, and pets.

Navigating everyday life with an autoimmune condition is possible.