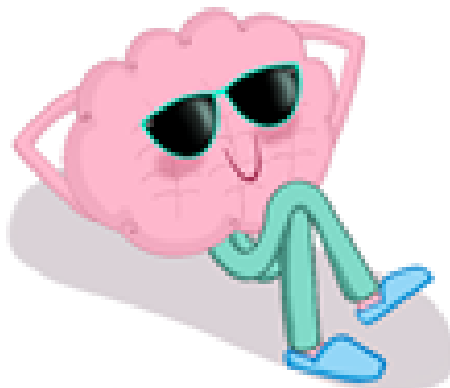


THE NO STRESS STUDIO



**MONTREAL
SCIENCE
CENTRE**

THE NO STRESS STUDIO

You don't need a university degree to take care of your mental health! Whether you are big or small, there is always something you can do to support your mental health. The "No Stress" Studio is a place where you can learn to cultivate your mental health on your own. Inside the studio, we understand stress to be a universal emotion that acts on our bodies in different ways. We'll share four activities that work with the body's psychological and biological stress mechanisms. The best part: you can easily do them at home!

Try these activities that can help you reduce your stress every day.

Have fun laughing, breathing, colouring and doing yoga.



Stress is a normal reaction that we get when something scares us. It prepares our bodies to respond to something we sense as a danger. Stress is what helps us focus and draw the energy we need to deal with the situation. Once we take action and avert danger, the stress response shuts itself off. The problem is that sometimes the stress response has trouble shutting itself off. Other times, it responds to dangers that aren't really there. When this happens, instead of helping us deal with a risk we've detected, stress starts becoming harmful. Gladly, there are simple ways to stay in control of our stress response, that is, by learning how to manage it physically and psychologically.

It's also important to keep your support network in mind – people you know and trust and who can be there for you when you need it.

Laugh yourself silly

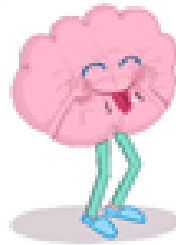
Laughter is a natural de-stressor. It's good for your morale and relaxes your muscles. It renews the air in your lungs and sends a signal of well-being directly to your brain, a bit like after a physical workout. Laughter is even said to be contagious ... Take a seat and test that theory.

Required material: A mirror

Instruction: On your mark ... get set ... get silly!

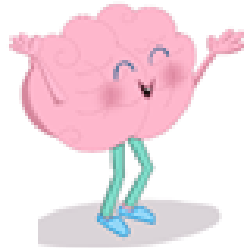
Make a face in the mirror. Hold it while you breathe in and relax all the contracted muscles while you breathe out..

1.Yawn.



2.Stick out your tongue.

3.Smile.

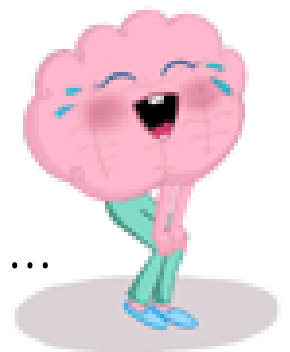


4.Stretch your mouth out to your ears.

5.Clench your teet



Laughter is even said to be contagious ...



Just breathe

We don't usually pay much attention to it, but **breathing is one of the easiest and most effective ways to calm our body's stress response.** You can keep your nervous system from sounding the alarm just by breathing deeply and exaggerating the movement of your diaphragm. This is a technique called "belly breathing."

Did you know that we can breathe up to 30 times a minute? Breathing is usually unconscious, but it can also be controlled voluntarily and can be very helpful in reducing stress. That means you have 30 opportunities to relax per minute.

The key to anti-stress breathing is the belly. Breathing from the belly, you work the diaphragm, an organ that opens your lungs wide to let in air. The diaphragm then sends anti-stress signals to the brain.

Required material : A feather held upright in a small container.

Instruction : Put your hands on either side of the feather. Breathe in through your nose and fill your belly. Breathe out through your mouth while pulling in your bellybutton. Watch how your breath moves the feather.



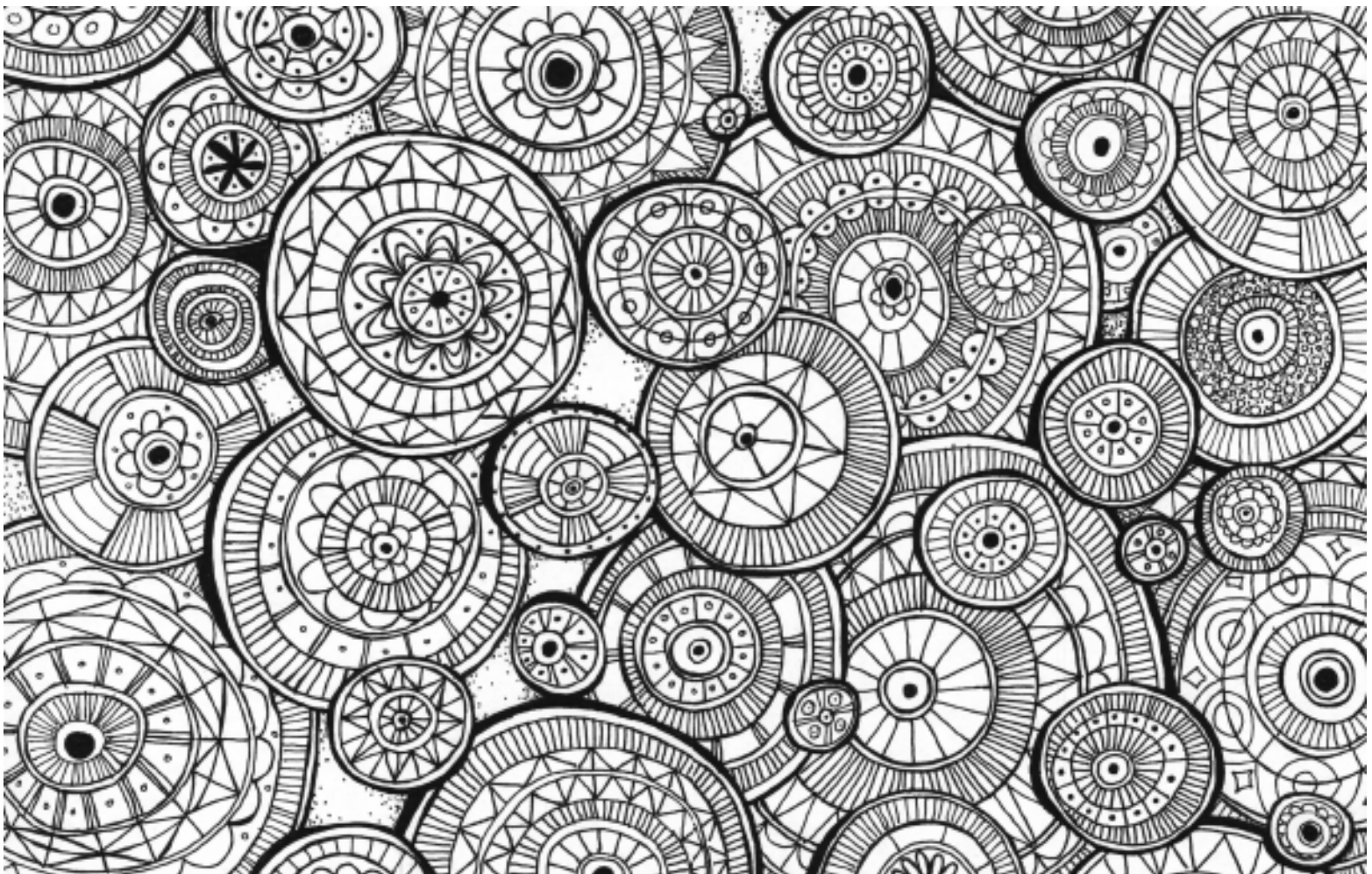
PERSONAL ART AND ART THERAPY: Get creative

Did you know that art can also be used to heal people? An art therapist uses art activities (drawing, painting, sculpture, assemblage, collage, etc.) as a treatment to help patients during their therapy and to uncover the meaning behind their artworks. This is known as art therapy.

Creating art can help you keep your attention on what's happening right now. Over time, this can train your mind to stay focused on what you are doing and to manage your emotions better. Whatever your creative activity, it reduces your stress and preserves your mental health.

Required material : Download this coloring, coloring pencils.

Instruction : Grab a pencil and color this mandala.



YOGA : Hold That Pose

Yoga combines focused attention and physical relaxation. Stress strikes the body and the mind, and yoga works on both these levels. The idea is to channel calm to both those places to turn off our internal stress alarm.

When you practice yoga, you're using techniques that help prevent and reduce stress. Relax and just focus on your breathing — that's all you need to connect with your inner yogi. Find a spot on the carpet, follow the steps, and try the snail pose, the eagle pose, or the cobra pose!

Required material : Yoga mat or a bath towel

Instruction :

Pose 1. Snail

Curl up on your knees and close your eyes.

Rest your forehead on the floor and stretch your arms alongside your body, palms up. Hold this position without moving for 5 breaths. Concentrate on your belly lifting with each breath.



Pose 2. Eagle

Stand with knees slightly bent.

Raise one foot and wrap it around your other calf.

Cross your arms at the elbows and join your hands, palm against palm.

Stay balanced, looking straight ahead, and breathe deeply 10 times.



Pose 3. Cobra

Lie face down with legs together and forehead on the floor, hands under your shoulders and elbows against your body.

Lift your head and push on your arms until they are straight.

Look up at the sky and breathe.

Hold this position for 5 breaths.

Exhaling, bend your arms to slowly bring your head and chest to the floor.

Relax for 5 deep breaths, forehead resting on the floor.

