



MEMBER UPDATE

ReFresh

October 7, 2020

I am pleased to share the first installment of **ReFresh: Recess for your Health**. Our thanks go out to the BCPVPA's Rochelle Morandini for coordinating this new weekly feature, where our members can find short, practical activities that encourage brief 'brain breaks' during the day to enhance resilience – from breathing techniques to chair stretching, to encouraging conscious rest.



This week...

Stretching, for Tension Release

Muscle tension is almost a reflex reaction to **stress**: it's the body's way of guarding against injury and pain. With sudden onset stress, the muscles tense up all at once and then release their tension when the stress passes.

During these unsettling days, many of us feel like we are in a chronic stage of stress that causes the muscles in our body to be constantly on guard, with little or no release.

Pause for a moment. Is your jaw tight? Are your shoulders tense? How is your lower back? We harbour tension for such long periods that we sometimes forget what having relaxed muscles feel like.

And, importantly, releasing that muscle tension before bed is mandatory for a recuperating sleep.

Reverse the impact of stress on your muscles:

Take a few minutes to stretch every hour or two.

Set a reminder on your phone, watch, or just use old-fashioned Post-It notes!

Here are a couple of posters of quick stretches to put in your office (pick one that you like):

Classroom Stretch Cards - High School

Classroom Stretch Cards - Elementary

Remember to stretch once every couple of hours, and *reflect on how you feel when you are done!*

And this evening, before bed, try progressive muscle relaxation

5 Minutes of Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Reflect on how you feel once you are done ... unless you have already fallen asleep!

Let us know how these stretches felt for you, or what you would like to see in this series: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.

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