

# CLOSING THE STRESS CYCLE



Every stressor creates a stress response. If you don't follow up on the *feelings and body responses* from those stressors, you can get stuck in the Tunnel of Stress. This is what impacts our emotional well being and mental health. Here are some ways to "Close the Stress Cycle."

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Adapted from Amelia and Emily Nagoski

## 1 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Aim for about 20 minutes. It does not mean you have to run a million miles. You can stretch, walk, run, bike, or do a more rigorous yoga routine.



## 2 BREATHING

Breathing deeply can reset our central nervous system. Try breathing in for 5 beats waiting for a beat or two, and then exhaling for 5 beats. If this doesn't work, just try to let your natural breathing rhythm take over.



## 3 CONNECT WITH OTHERS

It doesn't have to be a big hangout with friends. You can just be friendly with the barista at Dutch Bros or hold the door for someone at Target. It's meant to be a reminder that people around you can be kind and warm.



## 4 LAUGHTER

It's important that this laughter is authentic. It can't be the kind of laughter that is forced to make your friend feel like they are funny. It has to be real, from a good joke or a movie that always makes you laugh.



## 5 AFFECTION

It doesn't have to be physical affection but there is REALLY good research that a big, LOOOONG and heartfelt hug can help close the stress cycle. But be playful, cuddle your dog, or engage in some kindhearted banter.



## 6 CRYING

We all know how relieving a good cry can be. We know crying doesn't solve the problem but it sure can relieve some tension and it definitely can help close the stress cycle.



## 7 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Most of us can relate to the feeling of getting lost in art, music, dance, or crafting, etc. These things can definitely release stress we are carrying in our bodies.



- *Because we have been in state of chronic stress, it may be necessary to make time for one of these things each day. Even though it takes commitment and time, your body and mind will thank you for it later.*