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## HERE ARE SOME OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR YOURSELF:

- ✓ Get enough sleep and rest. Take a daily nap. One at noon is best or if that isn't possible get one right after work. Set up a ritual that gives you a regular hour of bedtime. Avoid sleeping pills as these often create dependency and may have side effects.
- ✓ Get regular vigorous exercise. Relaxed muscles mean relaxed nerves. Choose whatever exercise is realistic for your age and physical condition. Some examples include hiking, biking, walking, golf, tennis, home calisthenics, and swimming.
- ✓ Love more. Most people need to learn to love people and use things instead of loving things and using people.
- ✓ Don't be afraid of compromise. In a stressful situation you can either fight, back off, or compromise. You don't always have to choose to fight or feel defeated if you back off.
- ✓ Avoid coping solutions that involve alcohol or drugs. A little relaxation is fine, but drinking or using drugs each time you are faced with a problem soon leads to addiction.
- ✓ Identify your fears, even list them. Talk your problems over with yourself and others who will listen. Try to think of ways to cope with them. Seek information about the things you fear. Knowledge can bring runaway fears down to earth. Make a decision, right or wrong, and then act on it. Anxiety results when you sit in the middle and let your fears tug at you from opposite directions.
- ✓ Avoid disruption. Try to maintain a balance in the face of disruptive elements. Reestablish calm after unavoidable upsets by following comfortable pre-set routines.
- ✓ Laugh more. Laughter is a good tension breaker. Laugh at yourself so that you do not take yourself too seriously.
- ✓ Avoid self-pity. Self-pity is a poor response to situations and usually a waste of time and energy.
- ✓ Avoid loneliness. Reach out and take the initiative in finding friendship. Treat people as though they were already your friends. Seek out compatible people.
- ✓ Meditation, yoga, Tai Chi, biofeedback, and many other techniques have been used to alleviate stress. The following exercises are from the book, *Triumph Over Tension* and are designed to help counteract stresses in your life. They can be done easily and comfortably by anyone, and require no special equipment. Try to spend 20-30 minutes a day on a stress-management program and make it fit

comfortably into your schedule. When you practice these exercises is not important. The fact that you practice stress management is very important. Try it, you'll be amazed at how much better you feel.

## **EASY EXERCISES THAT ARE DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY TO RELIEVE TENSION.:**

**Exercise 1 (Lying):** Lie on the floor with a small pillow under your head. Your knees should be slightly bent. Put one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. Draw deep breaths into your abdomen and feel it rise. Your chest should hardly move at all. Belly-breathe without your chest moving and, as you exhale through your nose, try to say "cheese" Do this five times. Then take a deep breath, as deep as you can, and exhale saying "ha-a-a-a."

" Your jaw, tongue, and mouth should all be relaxed. Do this five times. Hold your breath for thirty seconds. Then sigh deeply, letting all the air out of your lungs. Permit the air to return to your lungs naturally. Do this five times.

**Exercise 2 (Standing):** Stand with your knees slightly bent but not locked. Many tense people tend to lock their knees, which immobilizes the whole body. Take a position with your feet about eight inches apart and bend your knees so that the weight of your body is in balance between the heels and the balls of your feet. The rest of your body should be in a straight line with your arms hanging loosely at your side. Let your belly hang out. Don't force it out but do not hold it in either. Breathe from your belly (see Exercise 1). Your back should be straight but not rigid, and your pelvis should be relaxed. Hold this position for two minutes. While waiting in line or standing at a party, try this stance. Try to keep it whenever you have to stand for any length of time.

**Exercise 3 (Standing):** Place your feet apart with your toes turned slightly inward. With your knees bent, bend over until your finger tips touch the floor. Then straighten your knees gradually until some shaking develops in your legs. Do not extend the knees fully and stiffen the legs, as this will not work. Have your mouth open slightly. All the time you are on your feet, your fingertips merely serve as points of contact. Hold position for the count of ten.

**Exercise 4 (Standing):** Stand as in Exercise 2 with your knees slightly bent. Then collapse and fold up like a doll on the floor. Be sure you do it slowly and that you use a carpeted floor or mat. Repeat three times.

**Exercise 5 (Standing or Sitting):** Stand or sit and extend your arms straight out from your shoulders. Then swing both arms around yourself in a hug, and then extend them out again. Alternate putting your right arm over your left in the hug and then your left arm over your right. Do this with wild abandon ten times.

**Exercise 6 (Sitting):** No matter where you are- at your desk, in a meeting, at home, you can do this exercise unobtrusively. Wiggle your toes, giving special attention to your big toes for

one minute. Then circle your feet by rotating them on your ankles. Next tighten your buttocks, count to five, and relax. Inhale deeply into your abdomen and then exhale slowly. Not only will you relax, your shape will shape up. This is a good exercise to do every time a TV commercial comes on the screen.

**Exercise 7 (Sitting):** Take a deep breath, raise your arms to shoulder height and stretch your fingers until you can feel a pull in the fourth and fifth. Exhale as you lower your arms to your side. Then inhale as you lift your arms so they meet above your head. This gives you a feeling of soaring. Exhale as you lower your arms to your side. Do these two arm exercises five times.

**Exercise 8 (Sitting):** Turn your head to the right slowly. Turn your head to the left slowly. Bend your head back slowly. Bend your head forward slowly. Then turn your head and shoulders to the left and then to the right. Bend back slightly and then forward at your waist. Raise your right shoulder and let it drop. Raise your left shoulder and let it drop. Raise both shoulders while you bend your head backward. This is a great tension reliever for people who bend over a desk or worktable all day. Do this exercise throughout the day to keep your muscles loose.

**Exercise 9 (Sitting):** While you are sitting, put your hands on the arms of the chair or on the seat of the chair and do a chair push-up-raise your body off the chair with your hands. By doing this, you will use the muscles that are the exact opposite of the ones which become taut when you are tense. This counteracts the tension in those muscles.

**Exercise 10 (Sitting):** Bring your right knee up to your chin. Put it down. Bring your left knee up to your chin. Put it down. Point your left knee out to the side and then out it in its normal forward position. Do the same thing with your right knee. Repeat five times.

**Exercise 11 (Sitting):** Each time you feel yourself getting tense, squeeze your fists. Hold this for 5-10 seconds, then let go. This is a terrific exercise if you get really angry at someone; it helps you maintain control.

**Exercise 12 (Sitting):** Sit straight in your chair with your knees about ten inches apart and your legs slanting slightly forward. Then let yourself collapse like a rag doll into your lap with your head forward and your spine rounded. Close your eyes and imagine that your eyes are so loose that they are going to fall out. Let your jaw hang open. Rest your hands on your knees. Check yourself to be sure that you are comfortable and then tell yourself that your right arm is heavy... your right arm is heavy... your right arm is heavy. Repeat this twenty times while concentrating on your arm from armpit to fingertips. Then make a fist, flex your arms, take a deep breath, and open your eyes. After you become adept at making your right arm heavy, you can extend the heaviness to your left arm, your legs, and your whole body, until you are able to relax from head to toe.

**Exercise 13 (Sitting):** Bend your head forward with your eyes closed. Imagine your eyes are so loose that they are going to fall out of your head. Let your jaw hang open, and rest your chin on your chest. Take a deep breath, hold it, and begin to rotate your head. Move your head slowly around to the right, all the way back, and let your head fall back on your shoulder. Then exhale and rest. Start the same procedure to the left and rotate in the same way. Take a deep breath, hold it, and raise your right shoulder. Roll your shoulder forward,

up, back, and around in a complete circle. Exhale. Do the same thing with your left shoulder. This is a tension reliever for people who suffer from tension headaches and/or stiff necks.

**Exercise 14 (Standing or Sitting):** Do this fast exercise whenever you can, wherever you are, whether sitting or standing. Look up at the ceiling or sky while raising both shoulders at the same time. This is also good for those prone to tension headaches, shoulder pains, and neck aches. Do this exercise five times whenever you feel yourself getting tense.

**Exercise 15 (Standing or Sitting):** Stand up or sit up straight and look at the ceiling or sky. Smile and then blow an imaginary bubble high into the air. Repeat your smile and bubble blowing five times. This is another exercise which loosens the neck, shoulder, and facial muscles tightened during tension.

**Exercise 16 (Underwater):** In the bathtub or swimming pool, wiggle your toes underwater, one foot at a time and then both feet together. Roll each foot around in a circle clockwise and then counterclockwise. Flex each knee a few times. Shift your weight from side to side on your buttocks. Roll your submerged wrists in both directions. Bend and straighten each arm underwater. Roll each shoulder around from front to back. Turn around and with your face in the water blow bubbles. Do this three times.

There are two other exercises which are so often recommended for the relief of tension that we sort of take them for granted. But they are, indeed, two of the very best tension relievers.

**Take a walk:** Walking is an easy kind of exercise, but it uses a variety of muscles. It offers tranquillity, especially if you walk in a lovely or interesting place. If you have to force yourself to walk, do so by parking your car a considerable distance from your destination. For instance, if you have to go shopping, park a half mile away if you can. Walking around a shopping center can give your arms and legs a lot of exercise while you concentrate on other things.

**Jog:** Jogging has been called yoga in motion. If you have a question about whether your health will allow you to jog, ask your physician. It gives you a feeling of serenity and peace if you run at a rhythmic pace. Jogging is good exercise and a wonderful way to let off steam because, as has been pointed out in this book a number of times, our bodies were made for flight when stress occurs. And jogging is controlled flight.