Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**CALM 20**

**Relax Your Stress Away**

**Great Ways to De-Stress**

Your shoulders are tense, your back hurts. You feel grouchy and know it’s all due to stress. What can you do? The relaxation techniques below can help relieve both the physical and emotional tension that often follows stressful situations.

**Relax Your Body**

The next time you feel the effects of too much stress, try some of the following ways to help you relax:

1. Deep Breathing – while sitting, lying down or standing, close your eyes and breathe in slowly. Let the breath out for a count of 5-10 seconds. Take ten of these super-relaxers any time you feel tense.
2. Stretching – practice simple stretches such as the “neck stretch” – stretch your neck by gently rolling your head in a half circle, starting at one side, then dropping your chin to your chest – then do the other side.
3. Exercise – all physical activity (hiking, running, bowling, walking, etc.) helps to reduce stress.
4. Take a bath – ask household members to allow you at least 30 minutes of uninterrupted time.
5. Get a massage – a massage is a wonderful way to get rid of physical tension. Massage Therapists generally take 30 minutes to an hour, and will work on specific areas of tension, such as lower back or neck.
6. Eat well – reduce caffeine (from coffee, black tea, chocolate), and alcohol intake. Find out if your diet is well balanced, and take steps to eat healthy to reduce stress.

**Relax Your Emotions**

Relaxing your emotions can be just as important as relaxing your body in relieving stress.

1. Talk – take time to walk with someone. Express feelings you might have been holding in. Listen carefully to your partner. Walking in a quiet neighbourhood or park can limit distractions.
2. Laugh – go to a comedy club, see a funny movie, or spend time with a funny friend.
3. Cry – crying can be as good a release as laughing. If you haven’t cried in a long time, try listening to sad music, watching a sad movie, or writing about a sad experience.
4. Read – a good book is a great escape. Reading a tear-jerker or comedy can help release pent-up emotions.
5. Do something you love – when you enjoy yourself, whether it’s gardening, going to the beach, or seeing friends, you relax your emotions.

**Create Stress Reducers**

These are just a few stress reducers you can try. You can create your own healthy stress reducers (without alcohol or drugs), or use those listed above. You’ll feel better and stay healthier if you do!