

ON-THE-JOB STRESS SOOTHERS

When Christie Brinkley needs a little R&R, she turns to Dr. Joe Caraccilo, a chiropractor and yoga instructor in New York City, whose high-flying clientele come to him for a little down time. Here are his suggestions for how to combat tension and fatigue when you are on the job. These exercises are quick and easy and can be done virtually anywhere, any time you need a break. An instructor can help you with the postures and be sure you are doing them correctly. The images on the left illustrate a type of contact yoga with Dr. Caraccilo.

Life at work can be very stressful. To still the restlessness of the mind without leaving your work area can be a valuable tool, turning a hectic morning into a serene afternoon. Before you get into the *asanas*, calm the mind with a simple breathing exercise. Breathing is an integral aspect of yoga. It generates heat (to soften muscles), relaxes the body, and helps block out distractions. Deep breathing expands the stomach during inhalation, which drops the diaphragm down and creates a vacuum that can draw more air into the lungs.

1. Place your hand on your stomach; take a deep breath through your nose and feel your stomach expand like a balloon.
2. Exhale through your nose while pulling your stomach inward. This forcefully expels the air, making more room for the next breath.
3. Repeat 15 to 20 times. Now you are ready to do the posture work.

THE ASANAS

1. *The Eagle Posture Variation.* This position relaxes the neck and shoulders while opening the chest. Sitting up straight in your chair, open your arms out to each side as though you were preparing to hug someone. Now bring your arms inward as if to hug yourself, interlace your forearms, crossing one elbow over the other, and bring your palms together in a prayer position. Lift your elbows toward the ceiling and tilt your head back to get the full stretch.
2. *The Seated Spinal Twist.* If you sit in your chair all morning, the muscles of your back will inevitably tighten up. This asana will help alleviate pressure in the mid and lower back, promoting relaxation and allowing the creative energy to flow. Sitting straight in your chair, rotate your upper body to the right, grasping the far end of the back of your chair with your right hand and the near end of the chair with your left. Get a good grip and rotate your torso to the right looking over your right shoulder. Take 5 deep breaths and repeat on to the left side.
3. *The Tree Posture.* When things seem to be getting out of hand around the office and a little grounding is called for, this is the remedy. In this asana the standing leg represents the root and trunk of a tree, providing stability and strength, while the arms are the branches free to sway in the wind. Take off your shoes. Standing on your left leg, raise the right foot and place the sole on the left inner thigh (hang in there) with knee out to the side, holding on to the back of a chair to steady yourself. Slowly bring your palms together at the chest in a prayer position. Take 5 breaths and repeat with the opposite leg.