

Relaxing to Reduce Stress Pt. 2

LIVE HEALTHY
DRIVER HEALTH CAMPAIGN

TRUCKER SERVICE ASSOCIATION

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What's All The Hype?



The last couple of months, we've started to dive deeper into the implications of high stress that many truck drivers experience. We know truck driving is a demanding profession that often involves long hours on the road, irregular sleep patterns, and high levels of stress. These factors can take a toll on the physical and mental health of truck drivers, making it crucial for them to prioritize self-care and incorporate practices that promote relaxation and well-being. This month, we aim to explore the top breathing, meditation, and relaxation practices suitable for truck drivers. We'll provide instructions on how to perform them, identify the best times to practice, and highlight the potential health benefits associated with these techniques.

Let's dive in!



Deep Breathing

One of my all-time favorite practices to decompress and reduce the effects of a stressful situation in as little as a few deep breaths.

- Sit in a comfortable position, with your back straight and shoulders relaxed.
- Close your eyes and take a deep breath in through your nose, allowing your abdomen to expand.
- Slowly exhale through your mouth, like you're blowing up a balloon, focusing on releasing tension and stress.
- Repeat this cycle for several minutes, allowing your breath to deepen and slow down gradually.
- Best times to practice: Before starting a drive, during rest breaks, and before sleep.
- Benefits: Deep breathing reduces stress, increases oxygen flow, and promotes relaxation.

Take 2-3 minutes right now as you're reading this and give it a shot!

breathe

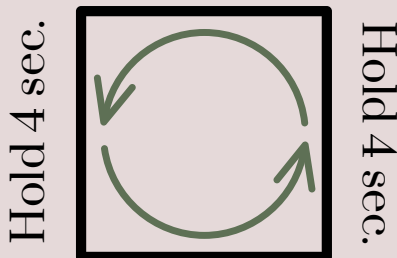


Box-Breathing

Perhaps, the easiest way to reduce stress, practice mediation, and to "get out of one's head" is through box breathing.

- Sit or stand comfortably, with your eyes closed or open.
- Inhale slowly through your nose for a count of four, filling your lungs completely.
- Hold your breath for a count of four.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of four, emptying your lungs.
- Hold your breath at the end of the exhale for a count of four.
- Repeat this cycle for several minutes, maintaining a steady rhythm.
- Best times to practice: During stressful situations, rest breaks, or at the end of a long drive.
- Benefits: Box breathing helps reduce anxiety, improves focus, and enhances mental clarity.

Inhale 4 sec.



Exhale 4 sec.

Mindful Meditation

A simple and practical approach to new-aged meditation that doesn't have to last hours while meditating in a cave. This approach is easy enough for anyone to accomplish and has powerful applications.

- Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or rest.
- Close your eyes and bring your attention to your breath, observing each inhalation and exhalation.
- If thoughts arise, acknowledge them without judgment and gently redirect your focus back to your breath.
- Practice this for a designated period, starting with a few minutes and gradually increase the duration.
- Best times to practice: Before starting a drive, during rest breaks, or after parking for the night.
- Benefits: Mindful breathing meditation cultivates present-moment awareness, reduces stress, and enhances emotional well-being.



Body Scan

Another great stress release and relaxation approach to calming the mind and the body all-the-while being able to relieve tension.

- Lie down or sit comfortably, close your eyes, and bring your attention to your body.
- Starting from your toes, gradually scan your body mentally, noting any areas of tension or discomfort.
- Direct your breath to those areas, imagining them relaxing and releasing tension with each exhale.
- Progressively move your focus up your body, paying attention to each part and releasing tension.
- Best times to practice: Before sleep or during designated rest breaks.
- Benefits: Body scan meditation promotes relaxation, relieves physical tension, and improves overall body awareness.




Muscle Relaxation

The last approach we'll discuss is one you 100% should not do while driving, however, it can easily be done while you're taking a quick break or after the long hours on the road.

- Sit or lie down in a comfortable position, and close your eyes.
- Start with your toes and progressively tense and relax each muscle group, moving up your body.
- Hold each muscle group tense for a few seconds before releasing and experiencing the sensation of relaxation.
- Continue this process until you have worked through your entire body.
- Best times to practice: During rest breaks or before sleep.
- Benefits: Progressive muscle relaxation reduces muscle tension, alleviates stress, and promotes overall relaxation.






Incorporating breathing, meditation, and relaxation practices into the daily routine can significantly improve health and well-being.

By dedicating small pockets of time to these techniques before, during, or after driving, truck drivers can effectively reduce stress, enhance focus, and promote physical and mental relaxation. These practices provide valuable tools for maintaining good health and managing the demands of the truck driving profession, ultimately contributing to a more balanced and fulfilling life on the road.

I highly recommend choosing one of the above practices and trying it out for 1-2 days before working your way through all practices we've discussed. This way of trying each one for a couple days will help you identify which practices work best for YOU!



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