

Free Stress Busters

(for when you need just a little more wiggle room)

- Go outside, barefoot if possible
- Breathe in for 4 counts, out for 7 (inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth)
- Breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, breathe out for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts (box breathing)
- Sit down before you have a difficult conversation. If you can, sit on the floor with your back against something hard.
- Bounce on an exercise ball, or rock in a rocking chair (works great when you've got a fussy baby)
- Turn on loud music and dance for five minutes
- Wear Loop earplugs, or headphones while you make dinner
- Try giving yourself an ear massage ([more explanation here](#)). Your vagus nerve runs through your ears. Notice if one feels more tender or tight than the other.
- Lay down on the floor for five minutes. Practice letting go of all your muscle groups and feeling them relax into the floor. If you have a weighted blanket, you can use this at the same time, or pile a few heavy blankets on top of yourself.
- Get a hug, or give a hug for 30 seconds or longer
- Make a warm beverage and hold it in your hands. Notice whether you're holding your breath and focus on the warmth of the cup in your hands
- Say a few breath prayers, while you wait for the water to boil "I believe, Help my unbelief"
- Sit on the floor with your kids and regroup with a simple prayer – ask them to pray for you
- Look around the room you are in, try to name 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste
- Change out of any uncomfortable clothing and put on something soft or comforting
- Turn off any noises you don't need – exhaust fans, random beeping, white noise or music playing
- Hum to yourself
- Sing a song you like (no tunefulness required)
- Use a foam roller to provide deep pressure to your muscles
- Do six or seven fake yawns, to stimulate a real yawn
- Relax your jaw, relax your shoulders. You are safe. You are okay.
- Practice visualizing a safe and happy memory, or place. Imagine as many sensory details as you can.
- **RED ALERT:** If you're regularly feeling so flooded by big emotions that you are having trouble controlling them, create a safe zone somewhere where you can do something like throw tennis balls at a wall, or break a glass jar in a bucket. Have a plan for what to do when you feel out of control.