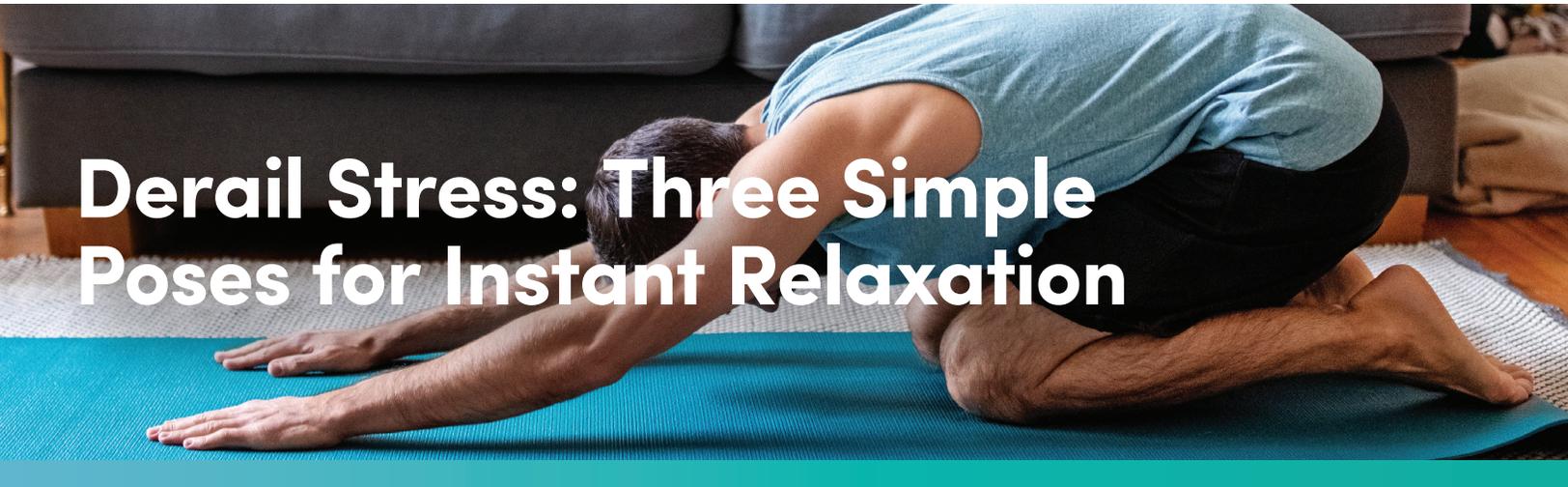


Derail Stress: Three Simple Poses for Instant Relaxation



Once the biological reaction to stress or anxiety is underway, it can be hard to derail the process. Supercharged by acute alarm or held in vigilance by chronic anxiety, the nervous system commits to a “fight or flight” response. Shallow breath, higher blood pressure and a strong sense of mental distress has the potential to take over without targeted intervention.

One easy, efficient and often immediately relaxing step is to go into one of three yoga poses designed to shift the nervous system from the sympathetic (high panic) mode, to the parasympathetic (relaxed) state.

The postures, which include head support, can be done anywhere that you have a little privacy and quiet. For optimal benefits, try to hold them for three to five minutes. In addition to being calming, the postures can be a great preparation for sleep. Try one before bed (or a nap) to unwind and release the day, letting go of expectations and making way for the pleasure and recovery that sleep will bring.

Standing Forward Fold

Bend forward without forcing a stretch, giving yourself some head support with a stack of pillows, a chair or stool – whatever allows you to rest your head and let your neck hang in its natural alignment. No need to touch your toes, just let your body relax forward comfortably.



Child's Pose

Get on your knees (you may want to use a mat or rug for comfort) and sink to the floor, dropping your hips and stretching your arms in front of you. Once there, you may rest your forehead on the floor or use head support as needed.



Legs Up the Wall Pose

Lie on your back with your legs up on the wall and your bottom close to the baseboard. If it feels more comfortable to slightly bend your legs then as they are supported on the wall, that's fine. You can also use something (such as a pillow) to support your lower back if this is more comfortable.



The Institute for Health & Healing is an integrative medicine group that offers a personalized approach to your care. In our network of Bay Area and Sacramento clinics, we provide evidence-based medicine that blends contemporary biotechnical medicine with holistic care, going beyond symptom treatment to serve the whole person.

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