

This Technique Can Help You Stay Out of the Dangerous 'Tension Triangle'

If you often deal with stress, anxiety or any tension-related emotion, this may be one of the most important stress-relief techniques you'll ever learn for how to deal with it.

Not only that, but I'll show you how this technique can even help you deal with procrastination or binge eating.

I only discovered this technique a couple of days ago myself. I was rubbing my forehead up and down with my fingertips and was disturbed to feel how sore the muscle beneath was. Then I rubbed beneath my collarbone and my upper chest. The muscles were sore there too.

What could be going on?

If you are feeling anxious or stressed, where do you tend to hold it in your body? Do you feel it in your forehead or temples, in your throat, in your upper chest?

Whenever you feel tense, it usually shows up physically in the "tension triangle." Imagine drawing a triangle with your forehead as the top/tip of the triangle and a line from each shoulder as the bottom/base.

If you spend a lot of the day in the tension triangle, it could be having a disastrous effect on your health. Many people practice addictive behaviors simply because they've learned that they relieve tension in the short term—even if they are destructive in the long run.

All they care about at that moment is getting out of pain.

But the techniques I'm going to teach you will show you how to

get out of that triangle in a healthy way:

The stress-relief technique. Pay attention to your body right now. Are your shoulders raised up or tilted forward? This stressful posture is comparable to a cat that arches her back up when she feels threatened. So pull your shoulders back and down right now. This simple act alone makes it more difficult to stay tense.

Are your legs or arms crossed? Uncross them if they are.

Are you breathing deep—from your belly?

Take a moment and breathe in through your nose, allowing your lungs to fill with air, counting from one to 10 mentally. Then breathe out through your mouth, deflating your abdomen, counting down from 10 to one mentally.

As you breathe, meditate on the following Scripture:

- “The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty has given me life” (Job 33:4).

When I think about the breath of God flowing through my lungs, it makes me feel calm and centered. It also helps me to become present-minded. Most of the mental pain and stress people experience come from either fear of the future or rejection and regrets from the past.

But controlling your breath and meditating on God’s Word help prevent that self-defeating tendency to “time travel.”

- “Brothers, I do not count myself to have attained, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead” (Phil. 3:13).
- “Therefore, take no thought about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take thought about the things of itself. Sufficient to the day is the trouble thereof” (Matt. 6:34).

With these practices, you stay present and engaged in your life right now. You have confidence that God is with you, and His grace is sufficient to help you deal with any challenge life throws at you.

How to stop procrastination with stress relief. This technique also can help if you procrastinate a lot. Have you ever noticed that the things you procrastinate on usually are things that are most good for you to do in the long run?

When you procrastinate, ask yourself the following two questions:

- What pain am I imagining that I'll experience if I take action?
- Could I breathe through that?

Question No. 1 is based the time-travel tendency—you likely are imagining future pain. When I procrastinate, my pain usually comes from imagining the future tension I'd feel from the tension triangle.

However, now I think of this mental resistance as like birthing pains. Typically, the thing you are procrastinating on is about giving birth to something new—it could be a healthier you physically, more financial responsibility, a cleaner house, or a more organized office.

Whatever it is, there is going to be tension between the way things are now versus the way you want them to be.

I've learned that I can short-circuit that "birthing pain" through the simple techniques of exiting the tension triangle. I do the task I've been putting off, but I use the stress-relief technique to release muscle tension.

If my shoulders try to raise themselves up or tilt forward in tension, I lower them and pull them back.

I keep my breath even and use the "one to 10, 10 to one"

breathing pattern throughout the activity. I meditate on my Scripture, imagining God's breath in me, empowering me to do what needs to be done.

Before I know it, I am finished! If you do this right, not only will you experience the satisfaction of a completed job, but you will benefit your body too.

How to stop binge eating with stress relief. If you find yourself eating a lot when you are not physically hungry, check your body to see if you are tense:

- Where is your shoulder position?
- Where is your breathing?

Here is a little-known fact: Opening your mouth and/or chewing is actually a tension-relieving activity! So eating is likely your unconscious attempt to get yourself out of the tension triangle.

In fact, open your mouth right now and let your jaw go slack. Lower your eyebrows. You'll look like you are screaming or yawning. Sometimes, I'll even stick my tongue out. It makes it more fun!

After a few seconds of this, you will feel tension draining away from your face and jaw—all without eating anything.

In addition, bring your shoulders back and down. Do the "one to 10, 10 to one" breathing pattern while meditating on Job 33:4.

Here are some other Scriptures I've meditated on as well:

- Psalm 150:6: "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!"
- Isaiah 42:5: "Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it."

After you release the physical tension, then shift your attention to another activity, preferably one that you've been putting off. Breathe through it as you do it.

I challenge you to pay attention to your body today. Make it a game. Can you catch yourself in the tension triangle? Share your experience in the comments.

Make a conscious effort to get out of the tension triangle throughout the day, every day. Your body will thank you for it!

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God's healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

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