

Shake Away Your Stress and Tension!

Shaking is a fabulous way to release stress from your muscles, lubricate your joints and get your circulation going. Shaking relieves anxiety, reduces tension, lets your thinking mind take a break and releases holding patterns so your natural, healthy energy can move freely.

For several years I taught stress management to employees in a large hospital system. Shaking was one of the simplest and most effective stress relieving strategies of all. And while, yes, it often feels weird when you start, most people quickly find that it's fun and that it really works!

Many nurses told me that whenever they got into an empty elevator they would shake until they got to their floor or until somebody else got on. Now every time I go into a hospital, I imagine that the elevators are full of people who are shaking out tension and frustration and then walking back into their workdays with bigger smiles and a little more ease. Now that's an image of healthy health caregivers!

Why is shaking so great?

1. Shaking is one of the natural ways your brilliant body rids itself of stress.

Stress literally gets stuck in the body. Stress hormones, muscular tension and tight shallow breathing stay stuck in the body after even a mildly stressful event. The damaging effects of stress stay stuck in your body unless you have way to clean them out.

Shaking is one of the most effective and powerful stress cleaners.

Animals from rabbits to polar bears know this and shake dozens of times a day to clear away the effects of trauma and stress.

Children know this and naturally shake and wiggle away their tension until they are taught to sit still.

Your body also knows the healing power of shaking, but like most modern adults you may have learned to turn off this brilliant healing mechanism. Now, you can learn to turn it back on.

2. Shaking releases emotional tension.

My fiancé, David started using shaking as self therapy when he was in the final stages of a painful divorce. He found it the best technique for clearing the emotions from his body so he could access his natural optimism and vitality.

3. Shaking is great exercise!

Paula, an elementary school teacher, usually exercises in the morning before work. But she's found that on the mornings when she is short for time, shaking is perfect. Five minutes of shaking and she feels awake, energized, relaxed and alert.

Shaking can be aerobic, strengthening and improve balance. It loosens joints, increases flexibility, burns calories and raises metabolism.

4. Shaking releases you from the bondage of being too adult-like.

Shake off your adult-ness and let yourself reclaim the free, spontaneous, childlike pleasure of feeling alive in your body.

5. Shaking lets you feel ridiculous and silly!

And that's a good thing! Taking yourself too seriously is dangerous.

6. Shaking releases pain.

Pain is often caused by tension and tension always increases pain. My client, Cindy, suffered from restless leg syndrome for years and had tried numerous medications, with little benefit.

Shaking helped her tremendously. Lying on her back before bedtime with her legs in the air, she shook, kicked and imagined tension leaving her body. Doing this relieved her discomfort and allowed her to sleep better than she had in years.

7. Shaking helps you to relax.

Relaxation is difficult when your body is tense. Relaxation is easier and deeper when you have given the body a chance to shake off tension. Ease and healing then happen more naturally.

8. Shaking clears away energy blocks.

A healthy body-mind is one in which the energy, chi or prana, is a free-flowing river. In the same way debris often gets stuck in a stream, we get stuck areas in our bodies, and our energy river cannot flow. Shaking releases the debris and allows the energy river to flow freely so you can move, think and live more fully.

9. Shaking is fun!

Tips for shaking:

- **Breathe while you shake.** Let your breath be full and easy. Breathe away tension and pain.
- **Shake at your own speed.** Let it feel good to you.
- **Shake a small area**, such as a hand or arm or leg.
or
- **Just let yourself go and let everything shake, wiggle and shimmy.**
- **Shake sitting in a chair.**
- **Shake standing.**
- **Shake lying down.**
- **Shake away pain.** Beginning very gently, shake the tense, painful area. Perhaps an area that is very tight or painful will only want a slight tremble at first. As you let it shake you increase circulation to the area, release tension and may even begin to unwind old trauma.
- **Take shake breaks.** These are more energizing and fun than coffee breaks!
- **Shake off whatever rubbish is weighing you down.** Consciously shake off upsetting conversations, worries, annoying people. Who wants to carry all this around?!
- **Shake Dance.** Shake to music such as African drumming and wild percussive world music.

So the next time you feel a little tense, tired, angry, confused, worried, upset, the next time you have a mood that's stuck and won't go away: try shaking! Shake a little, shake a lot, shake subtly and shake wildly. Reclaim shaking as your natural healing response to the big and little stressors in life and notice how much better you feel.

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