

Here are four quick and easy ways to ease tension:

Press on Your Temples -- This application of accupressure--the oriental system that uses pressure points to relieve pain and treat a variety of ailments--works indirectly. Massaging nerves in your temples relaxes muscles elsewhere--chiefly in your neck.

Drop Your Jaw and Roll it Left to Right. -- People under pressure have a tendency to clench their teeth. Dropping the jaw and rolling it helps make those muscles relax, and if you relax the muscles, you reduce the sensation of tension.

Take Several Deep Breaths -- Belly breathing is what some people call it. it's an old and useful trick for defeating anxiety and nervousness. "The basic idea is act calm, be calm," says Bradley W. Frederick, D.C., director of the International Institute of Sports Medicine in Los Angeles, California. "When you're experiencing stress, your pulse races and you start breathing very quickly. Forcing yourself to breathe slowly convinces the body that the stress is gone, whether it is or isn't." The correct way to breathe? Abdominally--feeling the stomach expand as you inhale, collapse as you exhale.

Look Away -- If you look through a window at a far-distant view for a moment--away from the problem that's producing the stress--the eyes relax, and if the eyes relax, the tendency is for you to do the same. Take a pot off the burner and it quits boiling.