

Completing the Stress Cycle and other emotions:

7 scientifically-proven ways that can help us complete a stress cycle:

1. **Physical Activity** - ANY. FORM. OF. MOVEMENT. Running, walking, stretching, even just tensing and then releasing muscles can work
2. **Breathing** - slowing our breathing and focusing on our out-breath, making it especially slow and long, so the abdominal muscles are given a chance to fully relax
3. **Positive Social Interaction** - connecting with other people helps us tell our bodies that we are physically safe. Even moments of connection that may seem small do have a positive effect (e.g. saying hello to someone you walk past or telling your local shopkeeper you like her necklace)
4. **A Big Laughter** - and here, Nagoski is specifically talking about a big laugh-out-loud. The laughter that shakes your whole body. She even shares a handy pro tip here: even reminding ourselves of a time when we laughed out loud with someone else can have an instant effect
5. **Affection** - recent research has even shown that sharing a 20-second hug with someone (warmly hugging and feeling the stress melt away) can be just as effective in changing our hormones and mood as a going out for a long run.
6. **A Big Old Cry** - no, it won't solve the problem, but it lets the emotion flush out of our body. Nagoski advises paying attention to our crying experience: where we feel warmth or coolness in your body, where we feel tension or release in the body, how big or small our tears are, etc.
7. **Creative Self-expression** - The Nagoskis simply explain that it feels good to take what's inside you outside... and that's through self-expression, through art. A creative activity - such as drawing, knitting, dancing, writing, storytelling, making a photo album - gets our emotion outside our body into a safe physical space.

They're from a great book called: Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle by Emily Nagoski Ph.D. and Amelia Nagoski, D.M.A