



Energizing Stretch (3 mins)

When you recognize that students' stress response is (or likely is) ramping up, here is a quick and effective method for helping them to center and calm themselves so that they can be at their best in your class. Consider facilitating this for, and with, your students.

Introduction/Framing Prompt

"Before we get to the course activities today, I wanted to take a few minutes to check in with all of you. We're a few weeks from the end of the quarter and this is often a high-stress part of the term. When you recognize that your stress response is ramping up, I can offer a quick and effective method for centering and calming yourself. It is commonly used by professionals, athletes, experts, and students at all levels. Let's try it, if you're willing. Most can be done standing or seated, your choice. This will take only a couple of minutes and it can help you to be at your best for this class/test/exam/presentation.

"NOTE: If you'd rather not participate, that's fine – this is not required. We will be done very quickly."

Instructor leads with this guidance (do all or select as you wish):

1. **Reach for the Sky:** Standing or seated, stretch your arms up, straighten your back, and then push your arms as far back as you can comfortably go. Hold for a moment, then relax. Repeat at least once more.
2. **Side Bend:** While standing, reach one arm up and slowly arc it over your head to the opposite side. Do the same for the other arm. Repeat at least once more.
3. **Forward Bend:** While standing, bend at the hip and extend your fingers to reach toward your toes. Don't force it if you can't reach all the way. Remember that the goal is to stay comfortable and feel good, so don't push too hard. Straighten to upright. Repeat at least once more.
4. **Loosen Your Neck:** Let your chin fall to your chest, and then slowly raise your chin until you're facing forward. Close your eyes through this if you'd like, and raise your chin a little higher. Keep your shoulders down. Let your head go up and down a couple times slowly. Slowly turn your head to look to your left, then slowly to your right, and repeat a few more times. Don't let those shoulders creep up! Finish off by gently and slowly rolling your head in a circle. Repeat at least once more.
5. **Shoulder Shrugs.** Begin with a simple gesture of shrugging your shoulders repeatedly to get the blood to start flowing to your shoulders and neck area. Hold your shoulders up for a couple of seconds then slowly roll them back.
6. **Loosen Wrists:** Rotate both wrists slowly in a circle one direction, then rotate in the other direction.
7. **Hand Stretch:** Start with one hand in a fist and then open it wide. Repeat it slowly a couple times. Do the same for the other hand.

Debrief Prompts

- *“How was that for you? Can you notice that you may be at least a little more energized, a little more centered and focused?”*
- *“If you wish, we can do this again sometime – as often as you all wish. And you can try this on your own any time you’re starting to feel overwhelmed with stress or anxiety.”*
- *“Remember, whenever you begin to feel that your level of stress or anxiety is approaching the point where it’s more than you can handle on your own, Campus Health and Well-being has considerable resources to support you. It happens to many students, and there is no reason to feel shame or embarrassment when it happens to you.”*
- <https://hcs.calpoly.edu/campus-wellbeing>