

## Instructions

Learning ways to manage stress is important for life with migraine, since stress worsens migraine. Below are four self-awareness strategies proven to improve stress. Choose one to focus on for the next week. To build your practice up to the recommended 20 minutes per day, you can try the Ctrl M Health activities using your two-week free app trial. Visit [ctrlmhealth.com/app](https://ctrlmhealth.com/app)

## Strategy: Mindfulness

**Mindfulness** means being fully present in the moment, on purpose, without judgement. Mindfulness trains you to use all your senses and accept your experience just as it is.

**Recommendation:** Try to anchor mindfulness to your everyday activities like brushing your teeth, washing the dishes, or eating.

**Ctrl M Health Activity:** Read our Mindfulness strategy to learn more and try our **Breath Awareness** activity to connect to mindfulness using breath.

## Strategy: Meditation

**Meditation** is the formal practice of mindfulness. It trains the mind to be calmer and more aware. With practice, you can focus your meditations on different intentions like reducing pain or cultivating gratitude.

**Recommendation:** Find a quiet area and sit or lie in a comfortable position. For three minutes, practice noticing your thoughts without getting swept up by them, as if they are clouds floating by. If you notice your mind wandering, bring your focus to your breath.

**Ctrl M Health Activity:** Read our Meditation strategy to learn more and try our **Defusion Meditation** to practice observing your thoughts objectively.

## Strategy: Relaxation

**Relaxation** is the act of intentionally reducing tension, emotionally or physically. We often aren't aware of our tension; relaxation helps us recognize it and reduce it before it becomes a problem, like contributing to migraine.

**Recommendation:** Find a quiet area and sit or lie in a comfortable position. Slow and deepen your breath. Slowly scan your body, from your toes to your head. Use your exhale to let go of any tension you notice in each area.

**Ctrl M Health Activity:** Read our Relaxation strategy to learn more and try our **Body Scan** to train the brain to let go of unwanted tension.

## Strategy: Emotion Regulation

**Emotion regulation** allows you to see your emotions, thoughts, and behaviors objectively. By avoiding emotional and cognitive extremes, our reactions are more balanced and stress tends to lower.

**Recommendation:** The next time you have a negative experience, practice **STOPP**: **S**top what you are doing; **T**ake a breath; **O**bserve your thoughts, emotions, and sensations; **P**ull back to get some perspective; and **P**ractise what works.

**Ctrl M Health Activity:** Read our Emotion Regulation strategy to learn more and try our **Emotion and Thinking Traps** activity to modify unhelpful thinking patterns that can worsen migraine.

