



**Fear  
Free**

Leaders in  
Animal Wellbeing

# Stress Management Toolkit

10 Simple, practical tools to help you reset, refocus, and support wellbeing, for yourself and your team

Working in veterinary medicine or pet care can be incredibly rewarding, and also emotionally and mentally demanding. This toolkit is designed to give you quick, realistic strategies you can use throughout your day to manage stress, build resilience, and support a healthier workplace culture.

## 1 The 60-Second Reset

**Use between appointments or whenever you feel overwhelmed**

- Take a slow breath in for 4 seconds
- Hold for 4 seconds
- Exhale slowly for 6 seconds
- Repeat 3–5 times

### Why it works

Slowing your breath helps regulate your nervous system and quickly reduces feelings of stress and tension.

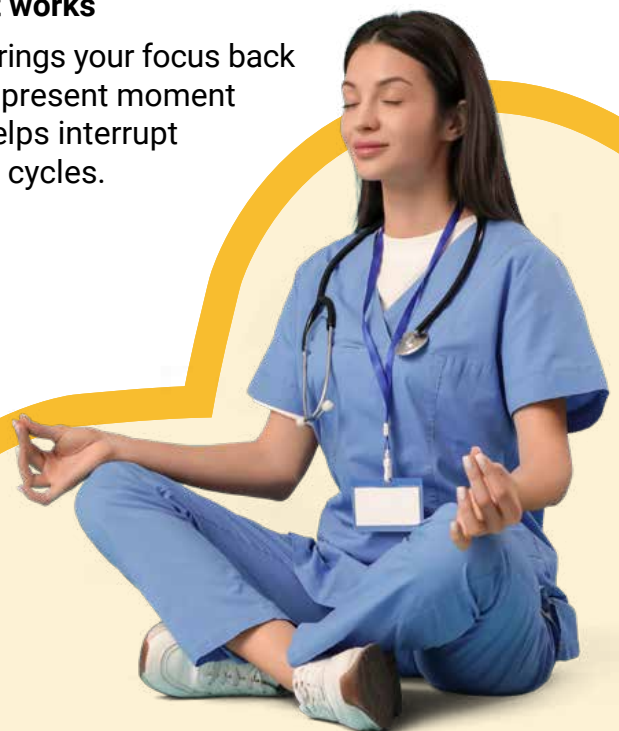
## 2 Grounding in the Moment (5-4-3-2-1 Method)

**Use when your mind is racing or you feel anxious**

- 5** - Things you can see
- 4** - Things you can feel
- 3** - Things you can hear
- 2** - Things you can smell
- 1** - Thing you can taste

### Why it works

This brings your focus back to the present moment and helps interrupt stress cycles.



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## Micro-Breaks That Matter

### Take 1–3 minutes every few hours

- Step outside for fresh air
- Stretch your shoulders, neck, and back
- Drink water slowly and intentionally
- Walk a short loop around the clinic or building

### Team Tip

Even brief pauses improve focus, mood, and energy.

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## Reset Between Appointments

### Create a transition ritual

- Wipe down your workspace with intention
- Take one deep breath before entering the next room
- Set a simple intention: “I’m present for this client and their pet”

### Why it works

Helps prevent stress from carrying over from one case to the next.

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## Support Through Connection

### You don’t have to do this alone

- Check in with a teammate: “*How are you doing right now?*”
- Offer help during busy moments
- Normalize quick debriefs after difficult cases

### Team Tip

Create a culture where it’s okay to pause, ask for help, and speak up.

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## Set Boundaries That Protect Your Energy

### Small shifts make a big difference

- Take your full lunch break when possible
- Step away from work conversations during breaks
- Give yourself permission to say, “*I need a moment*”

### Why it works

Protecting your energy helps prevent burnout over time.

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## End-of-Day Reset

### Leave work at work

- Write down 1–3 things you accomplished today
- Acknowledge one thing that went well
- Take a deep breath before leaving

### Optional

Create a “shutdown ritual” like changing clothes or listening to music on your way home.

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## Quick Stress Relief Tools You Can Keep Nearby

### Take 1–3 minutes every few hours

- Stress ball or fidget tool
- Calming scent (if appropriate for your environment)
- Water bottle to stay hydrated
- A short playlist that helps you reset

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## For Leaders: Supporting Team Wellbeing

- Model taking breaks and setting boundaries
- Recognize effort, not just outcomes
- Encourage open communication without judgment
- Build in small moments of appreciation

**Take care of yourself,  
your wellbeing matters.**

**Start with one tool today and  
build from there. Small steps can  
make a meaningful difference.**

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## When You Need More Support

### It's okay to need more than quick tools.

- Talk to a trusted colleague or friend
- Access mental health resources when needed
- Use professional support services available to you