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APPS WE LOVE

Apps We Love – Anti-Anxiety/Stress Management

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Gail Perry, CPA • Feb. 17, 2017



Well it's that time of year again. I remember my first busy season at Deloitte and how shocked I was to go outside after work on April 15 and see daylight – after so many long days, I had forgotten what that felt like! You get used to it, but if the long hours, the seemingly endless piles of work, and the lack of family and free time are getting you down, we are here to help! We scoured the Internet and also checked in with our CPA Practice Advisor community so that we could bring some solutions that might help you make it through the darkness.

Alina Nikishina, CPA, vice president of firm management/senior accountant at Inspirence Business Services really likes the app **Calm**. “I found it when I was looking for apps that would help with meditation. I love the themes and music/sound therapy choices and the guided meditations they have available. When

I'm having a tough day during tax season I will put on my headphones, choose my favorite theme, and turn on the meditation timer in Calm for 5-10 minutes and close my eyes. It really helps me refresh my brain."

Brett Mills, CPA at McCarthy Rose & Mills, likes Calm and also **Headspace** for guided meditation. "There are many benefits to meditation, some of which include stress reduction, reduced blood pressure, increased attention span, increased positive emotions, and reduced pain and inflammation. There is not a CPA alive that wouldn't benefit from practicing guided meditation during busy season!"

Scott Hoppe, CPA, CGMA, owner of Hoppe Tax, agrees. "Headspace lets the most average Joe successfully meditate. Highly recommended to be mindful of yourself and reduced stress."

Another vote comes from **Elizabeth Pittelkow**, CPA, CITP, CGMA, DTM, director of accounting and compliance at Arrowstream. "I love an app called Headspace. The first 10 meditations are free. If you purchase a subscription, Headspace makes a second subscription available to nonprofit partners for someone else to use. I do the meditations before bed and also during the day with some of my colleagues. Everyone can benefit from these meditations!"

Caleb Jenkins, CQP, of RLJ Financial Services, Inc., relies on the Bible for Stress Management. "I love to listen to the Bible while I drive into work each day. There are three Bible Apps that I like the best, 1) **YouVersion Bible**, 2) **Bible.is**, and 3) **Strongs Concordance**. I don't know how I could get through tax season without reading the Word of God each day and letting Him direct my paths."

Spotify Premium is the choice of **James Matthis**, CPA at Waters & Matthis CPAs. "Spend the money to go add-free. Nothing kills a relaxing mood like an ad from O'Reilly Auto Parts (no offense O'Reilly). I'm particularly fond of the mood playlists, 'evening acoustic' being my current favorite. Nothing helps me unwind like some relaxing music."

For people who need a quick getaway from stress, **Richard Roppa**, Intellectual Handyman at Quasar Cowboy Consulting, recommends **Buddha Board**. "It allows me to create 'water based art' that is as mesmerizing when I create it as it is when it is fading away. It is based on the Zen concept of 'letting it go.' It is impossible to resist when I am feeling overwhelmed and it always clears the clutter in my brain."

Cathy Iconis, CEO of Iconis Group, recommends three apps for stress and anxiety relief:

- **Modern Essentials:** “This is an app that suggests different essential oils to help with different ailments. If I ever have anything going on physically or emotionally, I put the symptom into the app, and it recommends some essential oils that can help.”
- **Instacart:** “I’m all about automating my life and making things simpler. I use Instacart to get my groceries delivered to me. I recently setup ‘recipes’ which will add a list of items to my shopping cart with one click. I’ve setup lists for weekly staples, actual recipes, snacks and more so I can quickly find what I need to buy.”
- **Wordbubbles:** “This is just a time waster that can take your mind off of work for a bit. Letters show up in bubbles and you have to put them together to spell a word. Definitely can relax you when you are overwhelmed with numbers.”

“My answer is a bit unconventional but my task management app, **Nozbe**, is the best stress reliever I have in my toolbox,” said **Kristin Ingram**, CPA, MSAT, MSAT Director, Barney School of Business, University of Hartford. “All of my tasks are listed there, which helps keep me organized, efficient, and less stressed.”

Arline Welty, partner at DataQuest, uses **Stop Breathe & Think**. “I’ve been using this meditation app to calm the panicked, ancient lizard part of my brain. You answer a few questions about your current state of mind and the app talks you through a 5-7 minute meditation. Also, I like the voice on the app. It is peaceful and strong. I heard about it from an acupuncturist!”

Sometimes you need to quell the background noise and create a soothing space of your own. A quick search for **Nature Sounds** on both iPhone and Android provides several options for creating your own calmness. Use either as background/white noise while you work, or take a break and block out the day. Many of these relaxing nature sound apps come with an alarm feature so you can take a timed break.

Psychologists at the University of the West of England in Bristol have created the **Self-Help for Anxiety Management (SAM)** app which allows you to track your anxiety and also there is a chat feature where you can communicate with and get advice from others who have issues similar to yours in a closed network. There are resources and tools covering 25 self-help options.

Kelleigh Tegels Nelson, senior partner marketing manager at Avalara, suggests you try **Binaural-Pure Binaural Beats**. “Originally recommended to me by a friend for

migraine management, Binaural also offers different binaural beats for meditation and relaxation, as well as binaural beats to enhance activity. I've found it is also helpful while traveling, almost like a white noise."

A highly rated app called **Breathe2Relax** provides breathing exercises that are perfect for short breaks. Whether you're managing stress, taking a relaxing time-out, or winding down as you go to sleep, this app from the National Center for Telehealth & Technology teaches the concept of diaphragmatic breathing and includes a stress tracker to help you determine the benefits of deep breathing. You can control the length of the breathing exercises as you get accustomed to this type of breathing.

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