Beat the Stress

24 WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19.



Powerful tips for a calmer, saner life.

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STRESS & YOUR HEALTH



Stress is sneaky. Especially right now, in the midst of the Coronavirus.

Sometimes you don't even know that you're feeling it until you turn your head and your neck hurts, Maybe you feel a constant pit in your stomach, or you notice your heart is beating faster than normal.

The truth is, some stress is normal … but chronic stress (like what can be happening right now with everything going on) can do a real number on your body.

It can wreak havoc on your hormones, making you gain weight (especially unhealthy belly fat).

And it can also take a major toll on your health, paving the way for illness and disease.

Scientists are learning more all the time about how stress can impact your health.

It's never been a big secret that stress causes illness, but until recently, it was never clear HOW it played a role.

STRESS & INFLAMMATION

But now it seems pretty clear that "chronic psychological stress" can affect your body's ability to regulate its inflammatory response. That's because one of your body's key stress hormones – cortisol – also plays a role in controlling inflammation.

As you likely know, inflammation is associated with practically every disease process affecting our bodies!

That's why put together this guide!

I wanted to do the best I can to equip you with the tools you need to reduce your stress levels and improve your quality of health as we deal with this pandemic.

TAKE BACK CONTROL.

Over time, having too many stress hormones in your system is linked with increased inflammation ... and all the problems associated with it!

What can you do about it?

Most of us have never learned how to use the powers within our own bodies to cope with stress.

In fact, many of us were taught to “walk it off” and ignore it, in hopes that it would just magically go away.

“Pushing through” is often the very WORST thing you can do to get through a tough period, since it can keep your stress hormones elevated.

If you're not careful, feeling stressed can even become your new "normal," so you don’t feel like yourself unless you’re feeling the pressure.

Unfortunately, this is the case for way too many of us!

The good news is, you can take back control by learning some easy techniques that will calm your body, ease your mind, and lift your spirit.

This ebook outlines 24 techniques and tips to help you feel less stressed.

We hope it helps you lower your stress levels and find more balance in your life!





STRESS ANTIDOTE

Breathe Away Stress

Your breath is an incredibly powerful tool to combat stress. It's so important that it's worth taking several short "breathing breaks" a day.

Why?

Deep breathing helps reset your autonomic nervous system – the system that controls your automatic functions like your heartbeat, blood pressure, swallowing, etc. – into a calmer space.

It only takes 4-5 minutes to feel more relaxed and less stressed!

We've included 3 techniques to help get you started with your breathing practice: one for deep breathing, one for relaxation, and another for energy.

Belly Breathing

Shallow breathing and stress go together like PB&J. Retraining your body to take deeper breaths will help you feel more relaxed and it can even help strengthen your deep core muscles.

Make time for belly (aka diaphragmatic) breathing sessions every week. You can do this lying down or seated. Note: This one can make you feel sleepy until you get used to it, so if you choose to recline, be prepared to take a nap!

- Sit comfortably in a chair, your knees bent and your shoulders, head and neck relaxed. Place one hand on your belly just below your rib cage, and the other on your upper chest.
- Breathe in slowly through your nose, feeling your stomach move out against your hand. The hand against your chest shouldn't move.
- Next, draw your stomach in as you exhale through your mouth. Again, the hand on your upper chest should remain still.
- Repeat for 3-5 minutes.





Box Breathing

This calming technique has been used by everyone from Navy SEALs and first responders to nurses and teachers! It involves controlling both parts of your breath (breathing in AND out) as well as holding your breath.
It's called "box" breathing because you do each part of the breath for an equal amount of time (4 counts), as if you are breathing around the sides of a square.

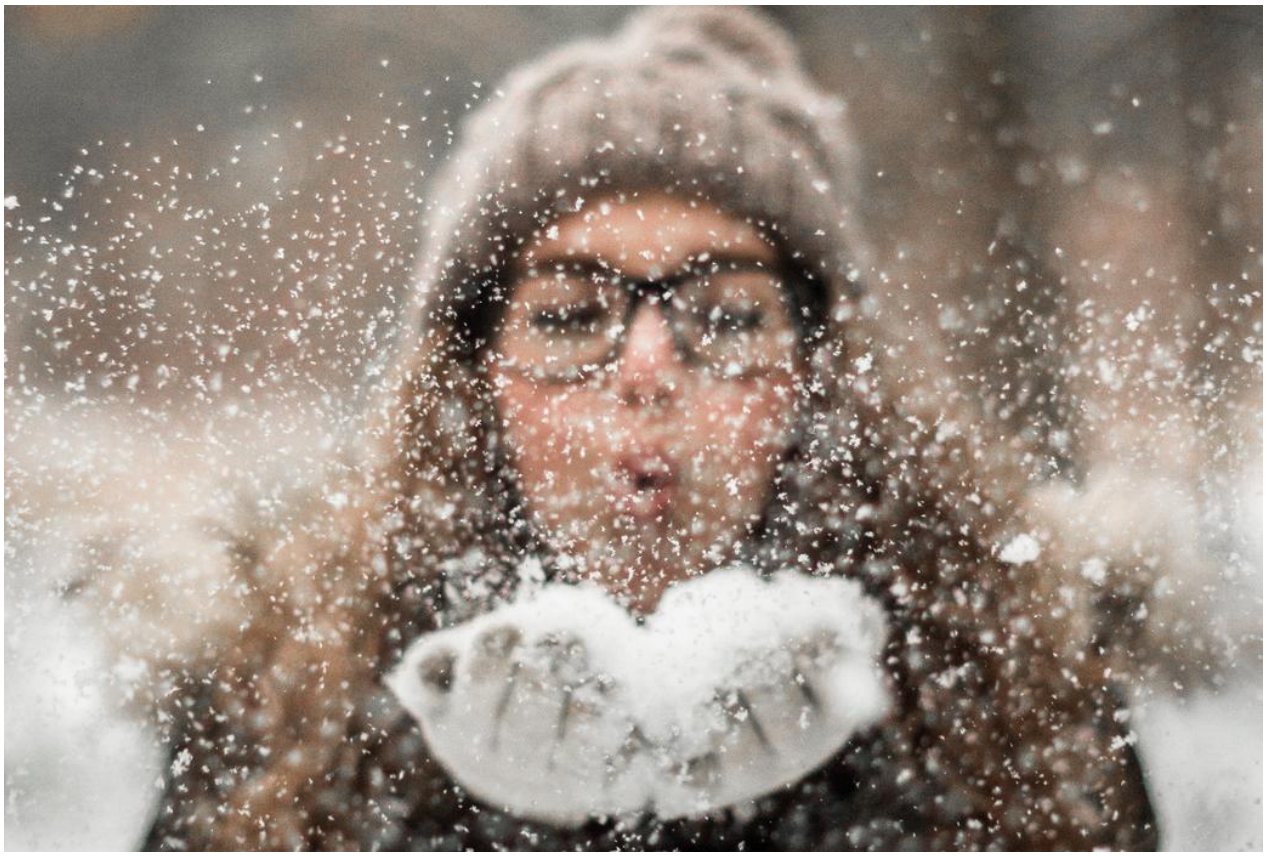
- To start, sit up straight in a chair, feet flat on the floor.
- Next, slowly exhale through your mouth as much air as you possibly can, for a total of 4 counts.
- Now, hold your breath for 4 counts,
- Then, gently and slowly breathe in through your nose for 4 counts.
- And then hold your breath again for 4 counts.
- For a full session of box breathing, you simply repeat the cycle for a total of 4 times through.

Energetic Breathing

This powerful breath technique was popularised by daredevil adventurer and breathwork guru Wim Hoff. It will simultaneously leave you feeling energised and relaxed. *(Note: it also might make you feel a little lightheaded or tingly when you do it – which Hoff says is normal.)*

Here's his basic technique:

- Sit comfortably and take 30 quick, deep breaths, like you're blowing up a balloon but in reverse – inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth.
- Next, take a slow, deep breath in and then exhale, holding until you need to breathe in.
- Inhale again, as deep as you can, and hold it for 10 seconds.
- Repeat as many times as you like.



TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

Go for a walk during lunch



Studies show that being in nature has a calming effect on your mind. Whenever possible, get outside and enjoy some quiet time during the day.

Stay Clear



Avoid "numbing out" stress with alcohol, drugs, food, or compulsive behaviors. That only causes more stress in the long run.

Move



In addition to regular exercise, try relaxing movement like tai chi, walking meditation, and yoga to help combat stress.

Unplug



Make time every day to be away from technology. Turn off your phone, power down your laptop, and go into another room (or outdoors) and enjoy the downtime.



HEAL YOUR BODY

A healthy body is a resilient body, which means you're better able to ward off the negative effects of stress.

- Getting regular exercise will boost your "feel-good" hormones and your immune system.
- Eating a healthy, whole foods diet will help you keep blood sugar levels more stable, which is crucial since stress hormones can wreak havoc on them.
- Be sure to get 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night to help your body recover and restore for the coming day.
- Quick Tip: Set a timer on your phone at regular intervals to get up and move around, and work off excess energy during the day.



CALM YOUR MIND

Over time, stress can become such a habit that it starts to feel normal.

How do you know if stress has become a way of life?

- Listen to the voice in your head and be aware of what it's telling you. Is it repeating stressful thoughts or phrases throughout the day? That's one big clue.
- Every once in a while, do a quick body scan: is your jaw clenched? Your shoulders tight? Are you holding your breath?
- You often feel full of dread, sadness, or anger, and wonder why no one else is getting with the (your) program.

If these sound familiar, it's time to start making some mindset shifts.

REDISCOVER YOUR FOCUS

Find your why



Having a larger purpose in your life can help put stress in perspective. You might find you have more than one "why" – it could be your family, your health, or some other goal.

Positive self-talk



Turn negative thoughts into positive ones. Example: instead of thinking, "Today is the worst … I'm never going to get everything done," tell yourself, "I can handle this if I take it one step at a time."

Organize your time



Learn to manage your time more effectively. Try not to overcommit. Break down big problems into smaller parts. Take one step at a time, instead of trying to tackle everything at once.

POSITIVE VIBES ONLY

Create a practice



Set a regular “positivity” practice: read uplifting books, pray, meditate, or watch inspirational videos on a daily basis.

Have fun



Make time for hobbies, interests, and relaxation. You'll come away feeling recharged and ready to tackle nagging problems.

Friends & family



Seek out social support. Spend enough time with those you enjoy.

Tune out



Stream some chill music or an inspirational podcast to give you a mental "time out" when dealing with road rage or other stressful events.



SOOTHE YOUR SPIRIT

Taking care of your spirit means taking care of the things that are in your own best interest.

- It involves setting clear boundaries – both for yourself and others – and making time for the people you love. Playing with your dog, hugging a loved one, or the simple act of helping someone will all help to reduce your stress levels!
- Keep a positive attitude – but also accept that there are things beyond your control.
- Surround yourself with things that lift you up, and say no to things that you know will create stress.

less stress. more life.



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