

Stress Relief and Meditation

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What is Stress?

- Stress is the body's response to perceived danger.
- Prepares the body for “fight or flight”: releases hormones such as adrenaline, cortisol, norepinephrine
- Increases blood flow to muscles, away from digestive tract and brain, to allow you to fight or flee.
- This allows you to slam on the brakes when someone runs in front of your car.

Stress Without Distress

- Stress in everyday situations can lead to many health risks:
- Inability to think straight
- High blood pressure/blood sugar
- Feeling irritated/agitated
- Slow/shallow breathing

Acute Health Issues

- Headache
- Muscle tension/pain
- Fatigue
- Indigestion
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Reduced motivation
- Irritable

Chronic Health Issues of Stress

- Insomnia
- Mood disorders (anxiety, depression)
- Overeating/undereating
- Substance abuse
- Social withdrawal

Holistic Approach to Stress Relief

- There are many healthy ways to relieve your stress:
- Have a hobby completely apart of your job.
- Avoid caffeine late in the day, and turn off your screens before bed
- Eat healthy foods
- Exercise! It releases feel-good endorphins

Holistic Approach to Stress Relief

- Know the symptoms: anxiety/restlessness, stress eating, shallow breathing, high blood pressure, tense muscles
- Meditation strives to do the opposite: calm/relaxed, deep breathing, relaxed muscles to lower blood pressure and stress/anxiety

Benefits of Meditation

- Sense of being present and grounded in the moment
- Acceptance of things beyond your control
- Way to focus on yourself for a bit in a healthy way
- Relieves stress and anxiety
- Improves concentration

How to Meditate

- Find a quiet, dark room free of distractions
- Turn off electronics
- Focus on sensations as they happen
- Thoughts wandering/falling asleep OK. Get back to the exercise when you can.
- Slow, deep breathing: stomach expands

Meditation Exercise

- Focus on breathing
- Sensation exercise (body scan)
- Muscle tension and release

Sources

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