



Design & Wellness

HOW TO MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR MIND, BODY & SPIRIT DURING STRESSFUL TIMES

*8 Simple Practices
To Restore Your
Energy, Vitality &
Peace*

MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR MIND, BODY & SPIRIT DURING STRESSFUL TIMES



Hello! I am Melissa Knight, PHD, RN, MSN, CNE! Most call me Dr. K. I teach various courses on stress management for women who are really suffering from stress and overwhelm. I teach them skills on how to discover hidden stressors and how they can do something about it.

I love helping women reconnect to their body, their hearts and spirit while learning to live a life filled with health, harmony and balance. This passion comes from a place where at several points in my own life I felt disconnected, overwhelmed, overconsumed with stress, worry and anxiety. I felt stuck and exhausted with life. My health suffered and for many years...I simply wasn't happy.

I tolerated stress for a long time. I had layers of it. I was ignoring my own needs and just working harder and harder. I admit, I'm a recovering stress and perfectionist addict. The truth is I enjoyed it and I loved the adrenaline rush of constantly achieving more and doing more.

And then it hit me....one day I found myself on the floor of my bedroom unable to move. I was having a full blown panic attack and guess what? I didn't tell a single person. You see, I'm a nurse, a wellness expert, a yoga and meditation teacher, a stress consultant. My job is to help other people live their best life but, yet, here I was on the floor having a panic attack.

One question looped through my mind over and over...how did I get here? Fortunately, for me I found refuge in my daily practices of yoga, meditation, breathwork, energy work etc...and all this helped pulled me out of panic and put me on a path to take back control of my life.

I wanted to share this story with you because like you, I'm human too. No one is immune to stress. So maybe you can resonate with my story and perhaps you feel like you are doing everything "right," but you still get overwhelmed and want to know why, and you want to learn how to come out of this vicious stress cycle so that you can live a more balanced and vibrant life.

I've been fortunate to learn some very simple yet powerful and useful tools and techniques that I will share with you in this Mini-E-book. These practices transformed my life and as well hundreds of women that I've coached. I hope these 8 practices will help you transform out of stress and overwhelm into living your best life! I hope you enjoy!

Let's dive in.

Love, Dr. K



BASIC & SIMPLE MEDITATION

BASIC MEDITATION GUIDE

1. Sit crossed leg on the floor or sit upright in a chair. Find a comfortable position that works best for you and begin to settle and relax.
2. Place your hand on your knees or thighs and open them up towards the ceiling, palms facing upwards.
3. Soften your gaze or close your eyes.
4. Soften your forehead, unclench your jaw, relax your shoulders.
5. Pay attention to the tension and stress in your body and let it go with your breath.
6. Take 2 deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.
7. Return to your normal breath
8. Focus on the rise and fall of your breath through inhalation and exhalation and the point at which air enters each nostril.
9. Meditate and focus on the breath for 5 to 10 minutes.
10. If your mind begins to wonder, just let the thoughts flow without judgement, and bring your attention back to your breath.
11. At the end of your session, take a couple of minutes to ground yourself before going about your normal activities.

MEDITATION

Meditation is the antidote to stress and suffering. Stress produces hormones like cortisol and adrenaline which overtime is stored in our blood, our muscles, cells and tissues which leads to pain and disrupts our hormonal symphony; making us feel fatigue, anxious, depressed. Chronic stress can even lead to weight gain, heart disease, diabetes and a host of other illnesses and disease.

In meditation we can center and ground ourselves. We can get away and step back from a very narrow focus of what's happening in our lives to that of calm and peace. Meditation diverts our attention away from the mental chatter of issues, problems and dramas. We become an observer or witness to the challenges we are faced with; watching thoughts as they come and go without judgement and without getting caught up in them.

Meditation broadens our awareness of who we truly are at our core essence and unveils the innerworkings of our internal world. Meditation gives us an opportunity to come back home to ourselves.

With this awareness, we can interrupt the stream of negative thinking or false beliefs about ourselves that tends to heighten with stress and burnout.

When we are overstressed we are drawing from our vital energy field that surrounds us and overtime we begin to diminish our own light field.

When we become more aware of the present moment and spaces within and around our body in meditation we train the nervous system by slowing down the brain waves; leading us to a relaxed and calm state.

Just sitting and breathing deeply from your diaphragm for a minute or two is a great start and can boost your mood and calm your mind! If you are new to meditation, you can even start with a simple 5 minute meditation (as listed to the left) to ease your mind.

Committing to a simple meditation routine will help you turn inward and will allow space for healing and renewal of your mind, body and spirit.

Visit designandwellness.com for private meditation coaching.



BENEFITS OF YOGA

- Improves posture, circulation, blood pressure, and lowers cholesterol levels
- Relieves back, hip, and neck pain
- Promotes weight loss
- Improves immune, cardiovascular and respiratory function
- Calms the nervous system
- Improves digestion and constipation
- Decreases inflammation
- Improves cognitive function, including memory, concentration, and awareness
- Boosts self-compassion and self-awareness
- Lowers stress, burnout, depression and anxiety
- Enhances healing
- Improves energy, vitality and longevity
- Connects the mind, body & spirit

For more information on private yoga therapy visit designandwellness.com. Always consult with your physician before beginning any exercise or yoga program.

START A YOGA PRACTICE

Yoga is a popular activity among those seeking total transformation in their mind, body and spirit! Yoga is associated with significant stress reduction and relaxation which makes it a valuable gift to give yourself while investing in your physical & mental health.

Surprisingly, just like an active exercise regimen, Yoga can help you relieve stress and also burn calories. For example, a 60-minute dynamic flow class will help you drop calories and water weight. Even a passive Restorative Yoga practice can aide in weight loss as deeper relaxation and calming the nervous system prevents excessive cortisol production (a stress hormone that contributes to weight gain and water retention) and also reduces stress/binge eating.

The many benefits of yoga for stress management and weight loss are touted by yoga teachers and health professionals alike. While yoga cannot cure all of our problems, most people who begin a regular yoga practice will experience considerable improvement in several areas of their life, including relationships, career, stress management, better mental/emotional/physical/spiritual health, well-being and weight management.

Yoga practice helps us to be in the present moment with ourselves, instead of thinking about the past or future and various other things that are going on in other areas of our lives.

Being present in the moment can have a considerable calming and stress-reducing effect. In addition, the balancing nature of yoga postures can reduce stress and tension within the mind and body. As one focuses on the breath in Yoga, it alters our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual state with a goal to soothe the nervous system and remove energetic blocks that stifle our personal and spiritual growth.

Ultimately, being more active whether that be committing to a new exercise regimen or starting a simple Yoga practice, both can help you move stagnant energy, help you think more clearly, feel better about yourself and help you sleep better and perform your daily tasks more easily while feeling less burnout and stress.



MINDFULNESS AND GRATITUDE IDEAS

- Keep a daily gratitude journal
- Make a gratitude list and practice daily affirmations
- Practice mindfulness and gratitude meditation
- Appreciate yourself and others
- Surround yourself with love and kindness
- Be present in the moment
- Find a gratitude accountability partner
- Volunteer your time
- Practice forgiveness and empathy
- Practice self-compassion

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS & GRATITUDE

There is a vast body of research highlighting the many health benefits of mindfulness and gratitude; which both keeps us anchored in the present moment and not pulled back into the past or pushed into the future. It's about the "present now"; acknowledging and being appreciative of where we are and what we have.

Mindfulness is defined as "a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations as they are". Mindfulness is used as a therapeutic technique that is helpful in living a happier and healthier life, reducing stress, gaining more self-awareness, increasing memory function, sharpening focus and cognitive function.

It is believed that increased gratitude is a common result of practicing mindfulness, and gratitude can increase one's overall happiness and health! Simply put, gratitude helps us refocus on what we have instead of what we lack. Through everyday practice of both mindfulness and gratitude, we can better cope with our stressors and day to day challenges as well to recognize how fortunate and blessed we are in life.

It is important to note that gratitude is not just about being thankful for the good things in our life, but it's about being thankful for everything in our life. There are things in our lives which might initially seem bad, but upon further reflection, it gives us an opportunity to recognize, learn and grow in all things. Practicing gratitude is gaining a life-view of thankfulness. By appreciating ourselves, our dear ones etc...we experience the purest form of positivity, love & bliss!

The benefits of gratitude and mindfulness include mental, physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual components. Practicing gratitude and mindfulness might help you to become more energetic and alert, more mentally resilient, less anxious, less stressed and depressed and can even improve your relationships! We all have good and bad days and gratitude and mindfulness helps us to ride the waves of life.



ENERGY HEALING

Energy healing is based on idea that our physical bodies are just a part of what we are. We also have an energetic body that can be manipulated and channeled to create and assist in physical, emotional and mental changes resulting in healing.

Ancient eastern cultures throughout time understood the sacred science of energy healing and that of the individual energy centers within the body and around the body.

Each of us is an open energy system. We all have an energy field that extends beyond our being which is the auric field and this energy field is one aspect of the human energy system, the other parts being the chakras and meridians which are found within the body.

This threefold system is vibrational in nature and continuously interacts within itself and with all other systems of the body. When the energy field is disrupted it creates disharmony within the body, mind, and spirit and leads to illness and disease.

Usually the human biofield can maintain its own balance and harmony however when there is a crisis, illness, chronic stress, trauma or chronic negativity in our lives, these events constantly drain our energy centers. This creates imbalance and disharmony in the energy field, the brain and the body which can significantly effect our personal well-being, our overall quality of living and even our personal health status.

With energy healing you can come home to yourself. You can come back to your natural rhythm where you can start feeling more vitality and more aliveness in your life. Energy work can aid in reconnecting you with healing source energy and healing the delicacy of your body's energetic symphony.

When you learn to tune in with your energetic and subtle bodies you can begin to release energy blocks and feel calm, relaxed and liberated.

COMMON ENERGY HEALING PRACTICES

- Acupuncture or Acupressure
- Reiki
- Therapeutic Touch
- Healing Touch
- Qigong
- Light Healing
- Sound Therapy
- Shamanic Healing
- Quantum Touch
- Emotional Freedom Tapping (EFT)
- Chakra Balancing Meditations

For more information on Reiki Healing and Chakra Balancing visit designandwellness.com.



GET ADEQUATE SLEEP

Plenty of techniques can help you reduce stress, however it is important to understand the link between stress and sleep. When we are stressed it impacts our sleep significantly. In a nutshell, stress can affect sleep and sleep can affect stress. Both affect the mind, body and spirit.

We spend roughly a third of our lives sleeping, however the way we sleep can either deprive us and deplete us, or it can energize and reduce our stress. Sleep deprivation may cause excessive weight gain and even lead to chronic stress and burnout; subjecting one to a host of disease and illness.

Perhaps you're feeling overwhelmed, anxious, irritable, fatigue and burned out while at the same time, you're co-juggling multiple roles as a wife, mother, career professional, etc...You have demanding deadlines, family pressures and an overwhelming workload....where is the time for sleep you ask.

Being under lots of pressure from social demands, such as work deadlines, or trying to be perfect in today's society can leave us in a hypervigilant state and makes it difficult to get good quality sleep. Facing big changes in our health and life such as menopause, for example, can lead to bouts of insomnia.

Excessive worrying about something and not feeling like we much control over the outcome of a situation can certainly keep us up at night.

There might be one big thing causing you stress, but stress is more so caused by a build-up of small pressures.

So how can one get out of this rut and vicious cycle of insomnia and stress? Read the following tips!

TIPS-MANAGING STRESS FOR BETTER SLEEP

- Assess your stress level & stressors
- Seek social & spiritual support
- Practice thought management
- Meditate and deep breathe
- Eat a healthy diet & exercise
- Delegate responsibility
- Let go of what you can't control
- Don't procrastinate
- Set realistic goals
- Manage your time
- Prioritize your most important tasks first

TIPS- GETTING QUALITY SLEEP

- Limit stressful activities or exercise close to bedtime
- Write in a journal before bed
- Control the bedroom environment (calm & cool temp)
- Read a book
- Avoid caffeine 4-6 hours before sleep
- Don't smoke or drink alcohol before bed
- Avoid large meals before bed
- Remove electronics and blue lights before bed
- Practice a restorative meditation before bed
- Listen to a calming sleep app
- Set a routine bedtime schedule
- Avoid using bedroom for work



PRIORITIZE YOUR SELF-CARE

Prioritizing self-care positions you to love yourself better, to give your best to your loved ones and the world around you. Self-care is not selfish, it's self preservation. Loving yourself more is about caring for yourself more deeply, and more consciously which enables you to make choices in life from a place of kindness, compassion, truth and love.

In today's social climate, when we are constantly striving to be our very best selves, it's not uncommon to run ourselves into the battleground of stress and burnout.

Attempting to burn a candle on both ends and spreading ourselves too thin will eventually take its toll on our physical, mental and emotional health.

My favorite quote by Eleanor Brown is "when you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel."

Taking time to love yourself more is all about prioritization. This is an absolute essential to build your resistance and resilience to stress and life challenges. How you care for yourself, and the time you prioritize for self-care, rest and reset, is just as important as the time you dedicate to anything else if not more important. When it comes to your physical and mental well-being, this becomes a major priority. If you don't take care of yourself first, you can not give your best to anything or anyone else. When you take time for self-care, you're creating the space you need to live a more healthy, happy and blissful life!

Taking care of ourselves and our physiological needs are basic human necessities. Hence, to truly reach a point of self-actualization and enjoy security, relationships and love, taking care of ourselves has to come first.

Ultimately, when we engage in some type of self-care ritual daily, we have more to give when we are active, well-rested and stress-free and in-turn builds our resistance to burnout. It all starts with becoming aware and paying attention to what your body is telling you what it needs.

SELF-CARE STRATEGIES

- Prioritize at least 15 minutes a day to yourself
- Schedule a self-care day
- Limit social media time
- Limit phone time/emails/TV
- Limit negative news and negative people
- Invest in more quality sleep
- Treat yourself to something nice
- Do something that makes you happy
- Spend time alone
- Practice assertiveness (learn to say no)
- Practice positive affirmations
- Set clear boundaries
- Choose wellness

Need more ways to invest in your self-care, visit designandwellness.com and book a FREE 30-Minute Wellness Discovery Call!



GET YOUR BODY MOVING

Let's face it, stress is a natural part of our lives but it's how we respond to it that matters. Making peace with your mind, body and spirit starts with building your resistance to stress while taking actions to better care for your physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual health.

Exercise and movement are proven stress relievers and can tremendously help you reset, refocus and gain clarity even in the most stressful of times. Surprisingly, research claims that only about one in five adults actually get enough movement and exercise to maintain good health. Consequently, inactivity may greatly contribute to added stress, burnout and excessive weight gain.

Here are 3 tips you can follow to start moving and feeling more happy and healthy.

EXAMPLE EXERCISE ACTIVITIES

Examples of moderate-intensity aerobic activities:

- brisk walking (at least 2.5 miles per hour)
- water aerobics
- dancing (ballroom or social)
- gardening
- tennis (doubles)
- biking slower than 10 miles per hour
- yoga
- boxing
- Tai Chi
- Qigong

Examples of vigorous-intensity aerobic activities:

- hiking uphill or with a heavy backpack
- running
- swimming laps
- aerobic dancing
- heavy yard work like continuous digging or hoeing
- tennis (singles)
- cycling 10 miles per hour or faster
- jumping rope

***For adults the American Heart Association recommends getting at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity, or a combination of both, preferably spread throughout the week. Add moderate- to high-intensity muscle-strengthening activity (such as resistance or weights) on at least 2 days per week. Spend less time sitting. Even light-intensity activity can offset some of the risks of being sedentary.**

Note: Always consult with a physician before beginning any exercise routine.

Source: <https://www.heart.org>

1. Start a Exercise or Movement Routine

This can be yoga, a cardio workout, dance, walking, Qigong...anything that gets your body moving. When we are stressed the body releases adrenaline and cortisol which is stored in the body and muscles. To rid the body of toxins from stress we have to move the body. The body was not designed to be sedentary. It was designed to move! For many of us however, it can be challenging to get started with an exercise routine, therefore it may be worth securing an accountability partner, wellness coach or even involve a family member or friend to help keep you motivated and focused on your goals.

2. Schedule your workout or movement activity

Whether that means putting it in your calendar, setting an alert on your cell phone or signing up for a class at your gym beforehand, if you have already committed to working out at a specific time, you will hold yourself accountable and are less likely to cancel.

3. Set realistic goals

A realistic exercise regimen is one that meets you where you are. If you haven't been active recently, having an unrealistic goal of exercising five days a week will make your goal seem unattainable and therefore you will be more likely to quit and give up well before you get started. If you live a fairly sedentary lifestyle, start out with a moderate exercise regimen two to three times a week or 150 minutes per week (yoga or walking is a great start!).



EAT HEALTHY & MINDFULLY

Studies show that those who eat while distracted, stressed or burned out are more likely to overeat or engage in binge or stress eating. This is because they're unable to pay attention to their body's fullness signals. Eating mindfully can help.

Mindful eating is maintaining an in-the-moment awareness of the food and drink you put into your body. It involves observing how the food makes you feel and the signals your body sends about taste, satisfaction, and fullness.

Try to chew slowly and thoroughly, which will allow you to better recognize your body's fullness signals and therefore you will consume fewer calories. It can also be helpful to take a few deep breaths before you start eating. This can induce relaxation and help keep your attention on your plate, rather than on your to-do list.

Several studies show that those who engage in mindful eating practices are less likely to gain weight from stress eating. Unhealthy calories, carbs and snacks like cookies, alcohol, sugary drinks and deserts tend to be the go-to when we are stressed.

The best way to overcome this is to mindfully eat, eat in moderation and control your portion sizes. To determine portion sizes and even that of saturated fat, sugar and salt content, it's important to read food labels carefully and stick to the recommended servings listed on recipes or that of your dietary restrictions. If this is difficult to do, always think "moderation" and cut back on taste-testing as this can add lots of hidden calories!

Forming a better relationship with food is where it starts. There are certain foods that can certainly help protect us from stress and ones we should try to avoid. See list!

Much Love, Dr. K

For more tips on stress management visit
designandwellness.com

EATING HEALTHY WHILE STRESSED OR BURNED OUT

- Eat Fiber Rich Foods (fresh fruits, vegetables, dark green vegetables, salads, legumes, whole grains- brown rice, wild rice, beans, oats, whole grain pastas, nuts & seeds)
- Avoid white bread and pastas
- Add 1 ounce (25-30 grams) of protein in each meal (lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and some plant foods like beans and quinoa)
- Stay well hydrated with water
- Eat more omega 3-s (chia seeds, flaxseed, hemp seeds, walnuts, kidney beans, seaweed, salmon, mackerel and cod)
- Avoid caffeine, coffee, soda, certain teas, alcohol and processed foods and artificial additives.
- Add dried fruit as snacks instead of chocolate chips or candies.
- For cooking season dishes with herbs and spices instead of butter and salt.
- Use cooking methods like baking, steaming, or grilling instead of frying.