

*Conscious Living: Managing  
Stress from the Inside Out*

Center for Lifetime Study


May 5, 2021

with Nancy Plumer




*Objectives of this workshop  
are that participants will:*

- **increase their awareness of choices to reduce stress in their lives,**
- **experience and learn stretches that release stress in the body,**
- **learn the Complete Breath,**
- **integrate one practice learned today into their lives,**
- **learn practices to increase JOY, EASE and FUN.**



Please have paper  
and pen available.



---

*Stretching and Getting  
into the Body*

**Stretches to lubricate  
the joints**

**The Six Movements of  
the Spine**


---

# *Centering*


- Calming the nervous system
- Bringing you to present – here now
- Releasing thoughts, worries, concerns
- Listening to that deeper part of yourself

## *Stress is:*

- **In a medical or biological context stress is a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension,**
- a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances
- subject to pressure or tension



What are the  
stressors in your  
life?



# *Stressors*

- Physiological: illness, injury, insomnia, poor nutrition, pandemic, inadequate fitness and changes related to adolescence, menopause, and aging.
- Environmental: noise, crowds, weather, time, job performance standards, and any threat to one's self esteem.
- Mental: our thoughts create additional stressors by labeling change or a given experience threatening, worrying.



# *Stressors for Seniors*

- Physical limitations
- Financial concerns
- Medical condition – your own or others
- Loss of partner/spouse and friends
- Loneliness
- Covid 19
- Others?

# *Stress Management Skills*

- Take care of yourself!
- Ask for help and build support networks.
- Learn and practice relaxation.

# *Taking Care of Yourself*

1. Healthy Diet – eat **WHOLE** fresh foods, preferably organic, less processed food, foods that nourish your body.
2. Exercise and Movement – regular exercise is vital, keep the body moving – walk, dance, workout.....
3. Sleep – minimum of 7-9 hours a night, naps if needed.
4. Social Connection – family, friends and connections with others.
5. Mindfulness Practices – meditation, breathing, relaxation, curiosity, pause, intentionality, etc.
6. Spiritual Practice – prayer, singing, yoga, chanting, gratitude, other.
7. Service – volunteer, helping others

# *Techniques for Managing Stress*

1. 3 – Part Complete Breath - Dirgha (Pranayama), 4-7-8 and 4-4-4.
2. Six movements of the spine and joint stretches.
3. Mindfulness – meditation, pause, awareness of thoughts, positive attitude.
4. Joy List – “where you put your attention is what you create more of in your life”
5. Awe Walk

## *3 Part Complete Breath*

- Also known as Dirgha Pranayama in the yogic tradition.
- Breathing into the abdomen, solar plexus and collar bone – full deep breaths.

# *Benefits of the Complete Breath*

- Relaxes the body and calms the mind.
- Revitalizes the entire system.
- Brings oxygen to the farthest reaches of the lungs that do not usually receive a fresh supply of oxygen and energy due to habitual shallow breathing.
- Breaks down the old habit of shallow breathing and reestablishes a new habit of deep breathing and relaxation. Increases focus and concentration

# *Benefits of Complete Breath continued:*

- Gives the abdominal organs a gentle massage with the rising and falling abdominal muscles.
- Improves digestion and elimination. Helps to relieve constipation.
- Strengthens the abdominal muscles, diaphragm, heart, and lungs.
- Very soothing during menstruation, especially when there is discomfort.
- Can be practiced during relaxation, meditation, and throughout the day at any time or anywhere.

## *Remember that:*

- Stress is defined as:  
“attempting to control that which you cannot control.”
- The only thing you can control is your reaction to situations, issues, or people.



# *Components of a Balanced Life*

- Moderation in all aspects of life -- family, work, pleasure, etc.
- Connection and Love --family, friends, community
- Healthy Diet -- three balanced meals each day, moderation with sweets, alcohol, fats
- Regular Exercise and Movement
- Play Time
- Plenty of Sleep and Rest
- Spiritual Practice -- prayer, meditation, yoga, singing, chanting,
- Ethical Principles
- Service

# *Cultivating Joy, Gratitude, Awe and Wonder*

- JOY LIST – make a list of all the things that bring you JOY and post it on the fridge as a reminder.
- AWE AND WONDER – cultivate awe and wonder daily in your life – nature, animals, people, art, music, etc.
- AWE WALK – take an Awe Walk, see handout

# *Viewing Awe Inspiring Videos*

*A way to lift yourself out of the mundane.*

1. Louie Schwartzberg

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxzKjF1ybWE>

**2. 3 Hours of Amazing Nature Scenery & Relaxing Music for Stress Relief.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHACKCNDMW8>

3. Greater Good Science Center

<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

4. Happiness Calendar

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGS\\_C\\_Happiness\\_Calendar\\_May\\_2021.pdf](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGS_C_Happiness_Calendar_May_2021.pdf)

*In closing, please reflect on:*

**One thing I learned**

\_\_\_\_\_,'

**one thing I will take with**

**me** \_\_\_\_\_.