

Stress Management



What is Stress?

Stress is your reaction to any change that requires you to adjust or respond. It may even be a good change. It's important to remember that you can learn to control stress, because stress comes from how you respond to stressful events.

Signs of Stress

The best way to cope with unhealthy stress is to recognize when your stress levels are building. While we often think of stress as the result of external events, the events themselves are not necessarily stressful. It is the way in which each individual interprets and reacts to an event that produces stress. People vary significantly in the type of events they experience as stressful and the way that they respond to these events. Your body reacts to stress with physical, mental and emotional responses.

Tips for Stress Management



1. Take a deep breath. Stress often causes us to breathe shallowly and this in turn almost always causes more stress. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count as you exhale—slowly.
2. Manage time. Plan ahead. Make a reasonable schedule.
3. Connect with others. Seek out activities involving others.
4. Talk it out. Share your feelings with a friends, family member, teacher, clergy person or counselor.
5. Take a “minute” vacation. Create a quiet scene. Imagining a quiet scene can take you out of the turmoil of a stressful situation. Play relaxing music or read a good book.
6. Monitor your physical comfort. Wear comfortable clothes. Change uncomfortable chairs.



7. Get physical. Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress. Try to find something you enjoy and make regular time for it. Remember, your body and mind work together.
8. Take care of your body. Healthy eating and adequate sleep fuels your mind as well as your body. Avoid consuming too much caffeine and sugar. In excess, the temporary “highs” they provide often end in fatigue or a “crash” later. Take time to eat breakfast in the morning. Well-nourished bodies are better prepared to cope with stress.
9. Laugh. Maintain your sense of humor. Laughter is good for you.
10. Know your limits. A major source of stress is people's efforts to control events or other people over whom they have little or no power.
11. Have a good cry. A good cry during periods of stress can be a healthy way to bring relief to your anxiety. However, if you are crying daily, seek a consultation with a counselor or a physician.



12. Avoid self medication. Alcohol and other drugs do not remove conditions that cause stress. These substances only mask or disguise problems.

13. Look for the “pieces of gold” around you. It is easy to fall into a rut of seeing only the negative when you are stressed. Your thoughts can become like a pair of very dark sunglasses, allowing little light or joy into your life. Commit yourself to actively collecting (noticing) five “pieces of gold” from your environment. Pieces of gold are positive or enjoyable moments or interactions.

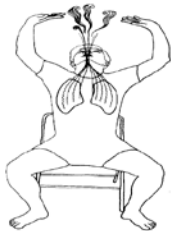


Relaxation Exercises

2 minute relaxation-Switch your thoughts to yourself and your breathing. Take a few deep breaths, exhaling slowly. Mentally scan your body. Notice areas that feel tense or cramped. Quickly loosen up these areas. Let go of as much tension as you can. Rotate your head in a smooth, circular motion once or twice. (Stop any movements that cause pain.) Tilt your shoulder forward and backward several times. Let all of your muscles completely relax. Recall a pleasant thought for a few seconds. Take another deep breath and exhale slowly. You should feel more relaxed.



Mind Relaxation-Close your eyes. Breathe normally through your nose. As you exhale, silently say to yourself the word “one,” a short word such as “peaceful” or a short phrase such as “I feel quiet” or “I’m safe”. Continue for ten minutes. If your mind wanders, gently remind yourself to think about your breathing and your chosen word or phrase. Let your breathing become slow and steady.



Deep Breathing Relaxation-Imagine a spot just below your navel. Breathe into that spot and fill your abdomen with air. Let the air fill you from the abdomen up, then let it out, like deflating a balloon. With every long, slow breath out, you should feel more relaxed.

Stress Management Resources

- ◆ Acupuncture-A procedure used in or adapted from Chinese medical practice in which specific body areas are pierced with fine needles for therapeutic purposes or to relieve pain or produce regional anesthesia.

Academy of Oriental Medicine at Austin
2700 West Anderson Lane #204
467-0370 professional clinic
371-3738 or 693-4373 student clinic
www.aoma.edu

Texas College of Traditional Chinese Medicine
4005 Manchaca Road
Intern Treatment is \$18.00
445-4444
www.texastcm.edu
Professional Clinic available as well
707-8828
www.austinacupuncture.com



- ◆ Biofeedback- Biofeedback is a treatment technique in which people are trained to improve their health by using signals from their own bodies. Psychologists use it to help tense and anxious clients learn to relax. Specialists in many different fields use biofeedback to help their patients cope with pain. For patients, the biofeedback machine acts as a kind of sixth sense which allows them to "see" or "hear" activity inside their bodies. One commonly used type of machine, for example, picks up electrical signals in the muscles. It translates these signals into a form that patients can detect: It triggers a flashing light bulb, perhaps, or activates a beeper every time muscles grow more tense. If patients want to relax tense muscles, they try to slow down the flashing or beeping.

Like a pitcher learning to throw a ball across a home plate, the biofeedback trainee, in an attempt to improve a skill, monitors the performance. When a pitch is off the mark, the ballplayer adjusts the delivery so that he performs better the next time he tries. When the light flashes or the beeper beeps too often, the biofeedback trainee makes internal adjustments which alter the signals. The biofeedback therapist acts as a coach, standing at the sidelines setting goals and limits on what to expect and giving hints on how to improve performance.

Biofeedback is often aimed at changing habitual reactions to stress that can cause pain or disease. Many clinicians believe that some of their patients and clients have forgotten how to relax. Feedback of physical responses such as skin temperature and muscle tension provides information to help patients recognize a relaxed state. The feedback signal may also act as a kind of reward for reducing tension.

Peak Performance Institute
4407 Bee Caves Road
347-8100
www.peakperformanceinstitute.com

Austin Biofeedback Center
3624 North Hills Drive
794-9355
www.austinbiofeedback.com

Austin Psychiatric Consultants
1500 West 38th St. Suite 53
377-2500

- ♦ Hypnosis-In the Hypnotic State, the doorway between the conscious and the subconscious is opened, memories become easily accessible, and new information is stored. In the Hypnotic State, you are not really "thinking" in the traditional sense. You are "experiencing" without questioning, without critical judgment or analysis, like when you watch a movie, and the hypnotherapist can make suggestions that are very likely to "stick" - precisely because your conscious mind is not getting in the way. You are not "judging" or being "critical" of the suggestions.

A less technical definition of hypnosis is: A naturally occurring altered state of consciousness in which the critical faculty is bypassed (mind in the conscious mode) and acceptable selective thinking established.

This simply means that the reasoning, evaluating, judging part of your mind (conscious) is bypassed. While we wonder how this could possibly happen, we are subject to it all the time. The advertising industry is dedicated to bypassing our critical judgment all the time in order to influence our buying behavior. With the critical faculty bypassed, specific thoughts/suggestions can be lodged in the subconscious where they can propel the client toward a desired goal or change behavior in a positive, permanent way. Any such suggestions must be acceptable to the client, of course. They would have no effect otherwise.

Hypnotherapist--induces hypnotic state in client to increase motivation or alter behavior pattern through hypnosis. Consults with client to determine the nature of problem. Prepares client to enter hypnotic states by explaining how hypnosis works and what client will experience. Tests subject to determine degrees of physical and emotional suggestibility. Induces hypnotic state in client using individualized methods and techniques of hypnosis based on interpretation of test results and analysis of client's problem. May train client in self-hypnosis."

Hypnosis, or rather self-hypnosis, is useful in teaching to reduce the stress.



Austin Psychiatric Consultants
1500 W. 38th Street, Ste 53
377-2500

Jan Ford Mustin, Ph.D
4407 Bee Caves Rd
347-8100

Psychological ARTS
4131 Spicewood Springs Rd, Ste E-2
343-8307
Slide-scale fees available

Sherry Payne, Ph.D.
4412 Spicewood Springs Rd, Ste 702
343-9056
Evening appts available

- ◆ Massage therapy- The rubbing or kneading of parts of the body especially to aid circulation and relax the muscles.

There are numerous day spas and massage therapists in Austin, but for less expensive options, check out the massage schools in town.

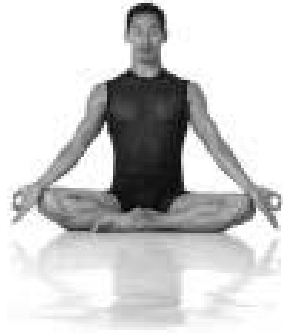
Austin School of Massage
2600 W. Stassney
1-800-276-2768
www.asmt.com
student massages \$25 for a 90 minute session

Lauterstein-Conway Massage
5407-B Clay Ave
453-2830
www.tlcschool.com
student massages \$30 per hour

Life From Within
Sharon Clark Eastham
413-3248



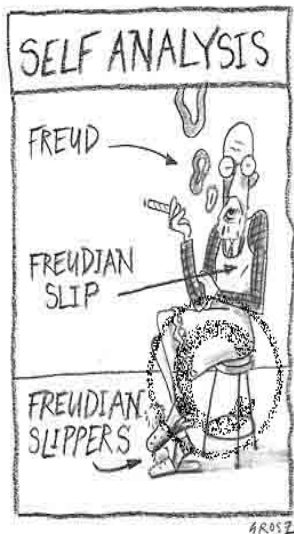
- ◆ Meditation- continuous contemplation or thought of a subject or a devotional exercise of or leading to contemplation.



Austin Meditation Center
 Offers free classes for adults and children
 2307 Rio Grande
 472-9642
www.austinmeditation.org

Mary Teague, Ph.D.
 Meditation
 1500 West 6th Street
 499-8418

- ◆ Psychiatrists, psychologists and counselors
 Check with your insurance company for therapists covered by your plan. Here are just a few suggestions



Northwest Counseling and Wellness
 Center
 12335 Hymeadow Drive Ste 400
 250-9355
www.ncwcjharvey.com

Affiliated Psychological Services-APS
 8140 N. Mopac Bldg II Ste 200
 346-2332

Austin Travis County MHMR Center
www.atcmhmr.com

Catherine Daniell, Ph.D
 2525 Wallingwood Drive
 347-8424

Katy Swafford, Ph.D.
 3355 Bee Caves Rd. Bldg 1, Ste 104
 328-8820

Austin Psychiatric Consultants
 1500 W. 38th Street, Ste 53
 377-2500

Biofeedback, chronic pain, hypnosis, therapy

Jan Ford Mustin, Ph.D.
4407 Bee Caves Rd
347-8100
Stress management and hypnosis

Verlis Setne, Ph.D.
1823 Waterston Ave
480-0212
www.setne.com
Stress management

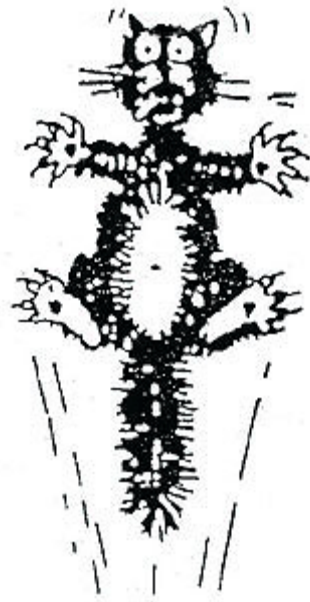
Psychological ARTS
4131 Spicewood Springs Road, Ste E-2
343-8307
www.psycharts.com
Cognitive behavior therapy and
hypnotherapy
Sliding scale fees available

Center for Rational Living
2222 at MoPac
452-8116
Stress management
Evening and weekend appts available

Sherry Payne, Ph.D.
4412 Spicewood Springs Rd, Ste 702
343-9056
Stress management and hypnosis
Evening appts available

Mary Teague, Ph.D
1500 W. 6th Street
499-8418
Stress management and meditation

Austin Stress Clinic
1050 S. Lamar Blvd
326-1717



- ◆ Yoga-A system of exercises practiced as part of this discipline to promote control of the body and mind

Yoga Yoga
South-1700 S Lamar-326-3900
North-2167 Anderson Ln-380-9800
Westgate-4477 S Lamar-358-1200
www.yogayoga.com



- ◆ University of Texas at Austin Resources for UT Students
 - Counseling and Mental Health Center
471-3515
 - Telephone Counseling (24 hrs)
471-2255
 - University Health Services
To schedule a medical appt: 471-4955
Nurse advice line: 475-6877
 - Health promotion resource center: 475-8252 (a lending library of relevant books and AV materials, as well as a resource for pamphlets, web sites, brochures, etc.)