

On-Line Resources

www.mayoclinic.com

www.apahelpcenter.org

www.stress.about.com

www.drweil.com

www.webmd.com

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/
Andrew_Weil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Weil)



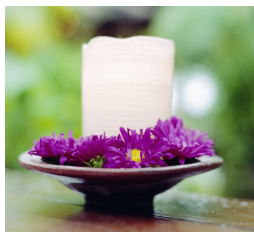
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Articles in this newsletter are not a substitute for the care and advice of medical professionals. When you have a question or need medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, consult your physician.

This newsletter is produced by Inova Health System in conjunction with your faith community. If you prefer not to receive this newsletter, please notify the appropriate personnel in your faith community.

Inova Health System is a not-for-profit health care system based in Northern Virginia that consists of hospitals and other health services including emergency and urgent care centers, home care, nursing homes, mental health, blood donor services, and wellness classes. Governed by a voluntary board of community members, Inova's mission is to improve the health of the diverse community we serve through excellence in patient care, education and research.



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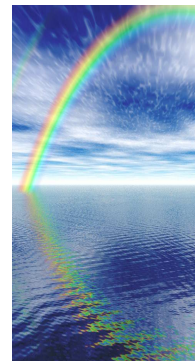
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For Your Health

De-Stressing Through Spirituality

What is Stress?

Most of us say it. Maybe you said it today: "I am so stressed out!"

But what really is stress?

Stress or the "stress response" is also known as the "fight-or-flight" reaction. It is the automatic alarm system that prompts your body to release a flood of hormones namely adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones temporarily increase blood pressure, elevate heart rate, and constrict arteries. When it happens repeatedly with no relief, it can be hard on your body.

There are both physical and mental or emotional triggers of stress.

- Fighting off an attacker or saving your child from getting hit by a car will trip your body's defenses. Good! In those cases you really need the energy boost.
- Psychological stresses from work, relationships, and life changes, will also sound these same alarms, and your body does not need the extra energy.

Excerpts from www.apahelpcenter.org.

Stress and Your Body

Over time, repeated exposure to stress can cause:

- Sleep problems
- Digestive problems
- Heart disease
- Depression
- Immune system problems



What Can I Do About Stress?

We all know that exercise, rest, healthy diet and relaxation techniques can all help “manage” stress. But can we “reduce” it with spirituality?

You may want to consider these possible benefits of using spirituality for decreasing stress:

- When you discover what is meaningful in your life you won't want to waste your energy on unimportant things.
- Find an inner peace when you stay connected to the world, even when you are alone.
- Give up responsibility and control over everything in life and that will free you to enjoy life's blessings as well as share life's burdens with people around you.
- Share your spiritual expression with a support network of family and friends, which will help you build relationships.

More Ways Spirituality May Lower Stress

- ♥ Prayer can help you feel more connected to God, leaving you with a calmer, safer, more grounded feeling that can act as a buffer against stress. It can also bring benefits similar to meditation including lower blood pressure, increased immunity, and more.
- ♥ Gratitude toward God has been linked with improved health outcomes, and can reduce the experience of stress as well. Keep a gratitude journal to express what you are grateful for.
- ♥ Those who have a greater trust in God may be more optimistic. Having trust that there is always another option available can help you develop more sense of control and more trust in your own abilities.
- ♥ Those who are more spiritual have the benefit of seeing stressful situations as tests of strength, or even as valuable lessons from God. This helps find more effective ways to cope, “turning a difficult situation into a path to a better life or greater personal growth.”
- ♥ What you focus on or the energy you put out is what you attract. If you focus on your frustrations or on negativity, then you will attract negativity. If you focus on what you want out of life or positivity, then you will let positive energy in.
- ♥ Take a day off. Once a week, take a day to NOT shop, watch television, or participate in business. A Sabbath day is not a useless, outdated, boring concept but a day for refreshment, for walking, writing letters, arranging flowers, reading, cooking a meal that is better than usual, loving yourself and all the life around you. The world will survive without you and you will be the richer for the day.

Excerpts from <http://stress.about.com/od/optimismspirituality/ht/spiritual.htm>