



Wellness Center at Fiorello H. LaGuardia, Room 323

5 Ways to Calm a Stressed or Anxious Mind Contribution by Sneha Patel, MHC-LP

Stress can affect us in many different ways and it can be brought on by a number of different factors. Whether it's academic stress, stress related to thinking about the future, or excessive worrying about a specific situation or perhaps a person, feelings of anxiety and stress can often be so debilitating it can be difficult to continue your day to day activities. With testing season approaching, stress and anxiety levels can be heightened. Below are some exercises or coping mechanisms that have been proven effective in calming us down when our body hits that anxious state.

1. **Mindful Breathing:** Mindful breathing is the practice of focusing on our breath in order to settle our nerves and connect to our body. Mindful breathing has been proven to reduce stress and anxiety, both short and long term. Utilizing guided meditations on YouTube or apps such as HeadSpace can help you re-center your thoughts and emotions, to reach a calmer and de-escalated state.
2. **Journaling:** When you're feeling negative emotions, it's helpful to "get it all out" in a healthy way. Writing down everything you're thinking and feeling or making a list of everything that's bothering you can help you feel a form of release. It allows you to think more clearly, and maybe even find a solution to your problem(s).
3. **Listen to Music:** The type of music that you listen to can have a huge impact on your mood. Regardless of the type of music that you are interested in, the act of simply listening to music when you are stressed can help to reduce your anxiety and stress. Create a playlist filled with music that makes you feel good and use your headphones to 'zone out' for some quality "you time."
4. **Use Essential Oils:** Essential oils, specifically lavender, have been used for centuries around the globe to help reduce anxiety and maintain a calm, soothing balance for the mind and body. Lavender has proven to improve symptoms such as restlessness, disturbed sleep, and somatic complaints, as well as having a positive impact on one's general health. Carry a small bottle of the oil with you, and inhale the scent deeply when you are feeling stressed or anxious. You can even dab a little bit of the oil on your wrist. You can also use this oil in an oil diffuser in your home or bedroom to create a calming atmosphere.
5. **Talk to someone:** Sometimes, we all need a shoulder to cry on or an extra set of ears to listen. Reach out to someone you trust, a close friend or family member, and let them know what's troubling you. They can help you calm down, feel better, provide support, and even comfort. It's important to not let worries and negative thoughts bottle up, as it can only worsen the anxiety or stress. Confiding in someone is also a great way to feel a sense of release!

For more Information Visit:

Celeste Robb-Nicholson, M.D. Writing about Emotions May Ease Stress and Trauma.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/writing-about-emotions-may-ease-stress-and-trauma>

Hyunju Cho, Seokjin Ryu, Jeeae Noh, Jongsun Lee. The Effectiveness of Daily Mindful Breathing Practices on Test Anxiety of Students.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5072593/>

Jun Jiang, Daphne Rickson, Cunmei Jiang. The Mechanism of Music for Reducing Psychological Stress: Music Preference as a Mediator.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S019745561530006X>



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For More Information About The Wellness Center:

Stephanie Forero (NYF Clinician) | stephanie.forero@nyfoundling.org | Room 323 | 646-477-6856

Sneha Patel (NYF Clinician) | sneha.pateal@nyfoundling.org | Room 323 | 646-629-0777

Nnenna Bodden (NYF Intern) | nnenna.bodden@nyfoundling.org | Room 323 | 347-859-5087

Jane Ray (NYF Intern) | jane.ray@nyfoundling.org | Room 323 | 646-630-1898

Michelle Watsula (NYF Supervisor) | michelle.watsula@nyfoundling.org | 347-803-5545