April 2015

Wellness Quick Read

From The Solutions Group Wellness Team

Fast Facts

It is estimated that **75 percent to 90 percent** of all illnesses are stress related. Learning to manage stress can help you live a healthier and longer life.

Put effort into creating a **support network**. Friends are important to share both good and bad times with. Although stress may make us want to withdraw, it can be very helpful to spend times with friends and family who are supportive.

Keep a positive outlook. This can be difficult to do when we think of this in a general sense. Break it down by trying to identify things that are going well or that went well. This might include something as small as the fact that you didn't have to stop at a red light on your way to work, or maybe that the sun came out on an otherwise cloudy day.

April is National Stress Awareness Month

Occasional stress is unavoidable. But when it becomes a constant in your life, stress can cause a host of issues from stomach problems and headaches to depression. It can even increase your risk of stroke and heart disease. But you *can* manage stress through exercise, meditation, and just plain relaxing. Check out these great tips for managing your stress.

Stressed? Know the Signs

Some people become so accustomed to a constant level of stress that they're not even aware of their actual stress level. All systems in your body from brain function and sleep patterns to digestion are affected by stress, so pay attention. Here are some common signs:

Physical

- Frequent headaches, jaw clenching, and teeth grinding
- Stomach upset including nausea, constipation, and diarrhea
- Insomnia
- Aches, pains, and muscle tension
- Lower energy levels

Emotional/Cognitive

- Feelings of agitation, frustration, and moodiness
- Constant worry
- Trouble quieting the mind and racing thoughts
- Inability to focus, forgetfulness, and disorganization

5, 4, 3, 2, 1- DONE!

Exercise is an excellent stress reducer. If you can spare 15 minutes, you can get a total body workout without going to the gym or buying expensive exercise equipment. All that's required is some space, comfortable clothing, and energetic enthusiasm. If you want more physical activity, repeat the workout again!

5 minutes:	4 Minutes	3 Minutes	2 Minutes	1 Minute
· 1 minute high knees · 1 minute jumping jacks · 1 minute front kicks · 1 minute jumping in place (think jumping rope minus the jump rope.) · 1 minute running in place	· 1 minute lunges or walking lunges · 1 minute mountain climbers · Repeat for 1 minute each	· 10 push-ups and then rest · 15 tricep dips and then rest · repeat for a total of 3 minutes	· 30 seconds of regular squats · 30 seconds of jump squats · repeat for 30 seconds each	- Plank

Recipe for Relaxation
Cannellini & Chard Risotto (Serves 5)

Swiss chard and other dark, leafy greens are a good source of magnesium, often termed the "relaxation mineral" because it can calm nerves and relax muscles. The next time you're stressed, try this quick, healthy, magnesium-rich recipe.

Ingredients

1 ½ cups low-sodium vegetable broth

2 tbsp. olive oil

1 large onion, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 bunch of chard (slice the leaves into thin strips, cut the smaller stems into 1/4-inch dice, discard the larger stems)

2 14-ounce cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained

4 tbsp. mascarpone cheese

1/2 lemon, juice & zest

½ - 1 tsp. fresh thyme, to taste

salt and pepper, to taste

1. Bring vegetable broth to a bare simmer in a saucepan over medium heat and set aside.
2. Heat olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat; add onion, garlic and the stems of the chard. Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened. Add one cup of the broth, cook and stir until almost absorbed.
3. Add chard leaves, cannellini beans and the rest of the broth. Cook and stir for a few minutes, then add mascarpone cheese, lemon juice and thyme.
4. 4Season with salt, pepper and more thyme if needed. Top it with some grated lemon zest before serving.

Nutrition Info: 320 calories, 16g fat, 6g saturated fat, 30mg cholesterol, 350mg sodium, 31g carbohydrate, 13g fiber, 12g protein, 35% vitamin A, 20% vitamin C, 20% calcium, 15% iron

Source: www.greenkitchenstories.com

Get A Whiff of Relaxation

Studies show that some scents, including lavender and rosemary, have a soothing effect on many people. Try scented candles, diffusers, or essential oils for the best results. Fresh flowers are great, too, especially when spring has sprung. But remember that some people are sensitive, even allergic, to strong smells. Be sure to ask those around you if it's ok before you fill the air with a scent you love.

The Solutions Group