



Exercise & Spiritual Practice for Stress Reduction, Health and Well Being

Exercise:

When you are in a stressed “fight or flight” state, exercise is a natural outlet to help restore your body to its normal state. “Good” chemicals, such as endorphins are released.

Aerobic exercise, such as walking, biking, dancing and swimming:

- Strengthens your cardiovascular system
- Increases your stamina
- Helps regulate blood pressure
- Helps regulate blood sugar
- Helps you work off “emotional steam”
- Relieves chronic tension
- Decreases feelings of depression and anxiety
- Helps you sleep better (caution: aerobic exercise should not be done 2 hours before bedtime; exercise in the morning, afternoon or early evening)

Stretching exercise, such as yoga, tai chi, pilates, or general stretching routine:

- Helps you relax
- Relieves chronic tension
- Decreases feelings of depression and anxiety
- Improves your circulation
- Increases your muscle strength and tone
- Helps with joint mobility
- Helps you sleep better if done before bedtime

Creating time to exercise:

- Set up a schedule of at least 3 times per week.
- Decide what days and times are best.
- Use music to help motivate you.
- Exercise with a friend if you need support.

Familiar excuses:

- I’m too tired.
- Exercise is boring.
- I walk a lot at work.

Spirituality and Well Being:

Spirituality means feeling centered, connected with a higher power or feeling that life has meaning and purpose. It may include religious practices or rituals. It usually includes some type of quiet time. We all have a need to express ourselves spiritually. However, the manner in which we do so is very individual.

Think about what is important to you and how you may already be experiencing meaning and purpose. Think about what would be helpful to you in expressing your spirituality consistently.

Examples of Spiritual Practice:

- Meditation
- Prayer
- Quiet reflection time in nature
- Spiritual or inspirational reading
- Meditative walking
- Going to worship services
- Looking at an icon
- Creating a home altar
- Bible study group
- Singing/chanting
- Drumming
- Spiritual Dance
- Yoga

Adapted from:

Self Care Strategies for Healthcare Professionals, Department of Nursing Research and Education, City of Hope, Kate Kravits, RN MA, Principal Investigator and supported by a grant from the UniHealth Foundation.

“When we attend to ourselves with compassion and mercy, more healing is made available for others.”

--Wayne Muller

Grace

Give me the **grace**
To care
Without neglecting my needs,
The **humility**
To assist
Without rescuing,
The **kindness**
To be clear
Without being cold,
The **mercy**
To be angry
Without rejecting,
The **prudence**
To disclose
Without disrespecting my privacy,
The **humor**
To admit human failings
Without experiencing shame,
The **compassion**
To give freely
Without giving myself away

--Source unknown