

Rising Above Your Stress: How mindfulness & neuroscience can enhance productivity and give you more peace of mind

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To give you more motivation, energy, and productivity:

- Name your energy thief. Dive into it, get clear about it.
- Process your worst case scenario with a friend to free up energy.
- Add in ways to calm your nervous system, throughout the day, to put your brain and body back into its most productive state.
- Strategies include:
 - Deep breaths, as well as sighing
 - Morning pages - 5 mins or 3 pages continuous writing
 - Walk or sit in nature
 - Reach out to your community, talk with a friend
 - Cardio or other workout
 - Yoga, Tai Chi
 - Meditate
 - Listen to music



How stress affects your brain [VIDEO]

Excerpts from this video by Madhumita Murgia (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuyPuH9ojCE&t=35s>)

“Not all stress is bad, it can give you an extra burst of energy, or added focus for a project.

When stress is continuous, it begins to change your brain – it’s size, structure, and function. During a stressful moment, your body releases cortisol, which prepares your body for action [fight or flight]. High levels of cortisol, over time, wreak havoc on your brain.

Key points:

- Cortisol can literally cause your brain to shrink in size. Too much of it results in the loss of synaptic connections between neurons and the shrinking of your prefrontal cortex, the part of your brain that regulates behaviors like **concentration, decision-making, judgement, and social interaction**.
- Stress leads to fewer new brain cells being made in the hippocampus. This means chronic stress might make it **harder for you to learn and remember things**, and can cause mental health issues such as **depression**.”

Resources – Blogs & Videos

This handout: www.sabrina-woods.com/mindfulness

Blogs, Meditations & Music

Sabrina Woods, Mindfulness Resources - <http://www.sabrina-woods.com/mindfulness.html>

Mindful Breathing Meditation (5 mins) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmFUDkjIAq0>

Mindful.org – Healthy mind, healthy life - <https://www.mindful.org/>

Yoga music on Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RTZNLL0wss>

Videos

Benefits of Mindfulness (Interview, 15 mins) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSXpHUyLK88>

TEDx Hardwiring Happiness, Dr. Rick Hanson - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpuDyGgleh0>

Parasympathetic Response: Train your Nervous System to turn off Stress - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FpKpW0EhYo>

The Sympathetic & Parasympathetic Nervous Systems, Dr. Russ Harris - www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2825kDSo4M

How mindfulness can help with rejection - www.mindful.org/how-mindfulness-can-help-your-brain-cope-with-rejection/