

Rising Above Your Stress: How mindfulness & understanding neuroscience can enhance your well-being

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To give you more motivation, energy, and sense of peace:

- Name your energy thief (what do you ruminate about that is stealing your energy?) Dive into it, get clear about it.
- Add in ways to calm your nervous system, throughout the day, to put your brain and body back into its best possible state.
- Strategies include:
 - Deep breaths, as well as sighing
 - Walk or sit in nature
 - Yoga, tai chi, meditation
 - Reach out to your community, talk with a friend
 - Cardio or other workouts
 - Morning pages - 5 mins or 3 pages continuous writing
 - Humor / Laughter
 - 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.

However, 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: Rising Above Your Stress: 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