

## Causes of Stress



*Stress is #1 cause of most illness and disease*

*Heart Disease, Cancer, Digestive Issues,  
Auto-immune Diseases, Depression, Anxiety, Memory  
Impairment, Weight Gain & Skin Conditions*

### **Food/Drink**

- Sugar & processed carbohydrates – Blood sugar imbalance/Inflammation
- Gluten & Dairy – Difficult on digestive system/Inflammation
- Heavy meals (including too high in animal protein) – Requires a lot of energy and stresses digestive system
- Caffeine – Increases cortisol levels which generate a “stress reaction”
- Alcohol – Damages your cells by oxidation, particularly the liver

### **Environmental Toxins**

### **Overscheduled/Overcommitted**

### **Lack of sleep**

### **Lack of daily light**

### **Chronic worry & negative self-talk**

### **Work or school**

### **Financial problems**

### **Family and children**

### **Relationship difficulties**

## 3 Stages of Stress

This theory was developed in 1936, by the endocrinologist, Hans Selye and describes our body's reaction to stress. He discovered that stress produces lasting negative chemical changes in our body in 3 stages.

1. **Alarm** – “Fight or Flight”. Our body releases cortisol and adrenaline. If this is not used up by physical exertion, it becomes a danger.
2. **Resistance** – If the cause for the stress is not removed, the body goes to its second stage called “resistance”. In order to sustain energy, our body increases blood sugar levels and blood pressure. If this continues for a prolonged period of time without any rest or relaxation, the body will become prone to fatigue, concentration lapses and irritability.
3. **Exhaustion** - In this stage, the body has run out of its reserve of body energy and immunity. The blood sugar levels decrease as the adrenals become depleted, leading to decreased stress tolerance, progressive mental and physical exhaustion and illness.

Today's busy and stressful lifestyle keeps our body in these stages with no periods of rest and recovery. We are in the “fight or flight” mode at all times to some degree which causes harmful stress to our health.

# Managing Stress

## Eat stress-reducing foods

**Broccoli/Asparagus/Spinach** – *magnesium (reduces stress), B vitamins and folic acid (help improve mood and regulate sleep)*

**Cantaloupe/Oranges/Lemons** – *vitamin C (helps reduce levels of cortisol)*

**Blueberries** – *vitamin C and antioxidants*

**Almonds/Walnuts** – *vitamin B2, vitamin E (powerful antioxidant), magnesium, zinc (increases resistance to infection)*

**Avocado** – *B vitamins*

**Salmon/Fish** – *omega 3s keep cortisol and adrenaline from spiking*

**Oatmeal** – *increases calm-inducing serotonin*

## Reflection

Take a minimum of 5 minutes a day to pray, meditate, journal, listen to soothing music, or take an Epsom salt bath. It will help reduce stress hormones.

## Deep-Breathing

When we become stressed, our breathing becomes shallow and sometimes we may find we are holding our breath. In an upright position and keeping your back straight, breathe in deeply through your nose filling your abdomen and then exhaling slowly and fully through your mouth. Repeat several times.

## Exercise

Physical activity will help reduce the effects of the “fight or flight” response. Try to walk for at least 20-30 min. It will help clear your head and you will always feel better afterwards. Even better if you can walk with someone who can be a supportive listener.

## Sleep

Eight or more hours a night of uninterrupted sleep is recommended for restoration and repair. The best time range to go to bed that will be most beneficial is between 9:00 PM and midnight because it is a more natural sleep pattern due to the sun.

## The 4 **A**'s to Managing Stress

**A**void – Try to avoid unnecessary stress by planning and being prepared.

- Prioritize all the things you need to do
- Make a “To-do” list and check-off as you complete
- Just say “no”. Learn how to say “yes to the person but “no” to the task. Explain why you are unable to commit currently

**A**lter – If you can't avoid the stressor, try to change it.

- Be more assertive in dealing with the problem
- Communicate your concerns in a respectful way
- Try to reach a compromise

**A**dapt – If you can't alter the stressor, can you change yourself?

- Try to change your viewpoint
- Focus on the positives of the situation
- Try to look at the bigger picture

**A**ccept – If you can't adapt, learn to accept what you can't change

- Look for the upside to the situation
- See if this can be a learning or growth opportunity
- Practice forgiveness

# Salmon with Lemon, Capers, and Rosemary

- 4 (6-ounce) salmon fillets
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary leaves
- 8 lemon slices (about 2 lemons)
- 1/4 cup lemon juice (about 1 lemon)
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 4 teaspoons capers
- 4 pieces of parchment paper and aluminum foil

Brush top and bottom of salmon fillets with olive oil and season with salt, pepper, and rosemary. Place each piece of seasoned salmon on a piece of parchment paper and place on a piece of aluminum foil large enough to fold over and seal.

Top each piece of salmon with 2 lemon slices, 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, 2 tablespoons of wine, and 1 teaspoon of capers. Wrap up salmon tightly in the parchment/foil packets.

Place a grill pan over medium-high heat or preheat a gas or charcoal grill. Place the foil packets on the hot grill and cook for 10 minutes for a 1-inch thick piece of salmon.

Can also place on cookie sheet and bake at 400° for 12-15 min.

Serve in the packets.

\*Serve with grilled or roasted asparagus

*Stress-reducing ingredients – Salmon, lemons, asparagus*

## 4-7-8-Breathing Exercise

Developed by Andrew Weil, M.D.

Although you can do the exercise in any position, sit with your back straight while learning this exercise.

Place the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue just behind your upper front teeth and keep it there through the entire exercise. You will be exhaling through your mouth around your tongue (try pursing your lips slightly if this seems awkward.)

- 1. Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound**
- 2. Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of 4**
- 3. Hold your breath for a count of 7**
- 4. Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of 8**

This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle 3 more times for a total of 4 breaths.

Note that you always inhale quietly through your nose and exhale audibly through your mouth. The tip of your tongue stays in position the whole time. Exhalation takes twice as long as inhalation.

Do it at least twice a day.

The 4-7-8 breathing technique works because when you are stressed out, your breathing becomes very shallow. People who experience long-term, chronic stress are often chronically under-breathing and are in a constant state of oxygen deprivation. Additionally, under-breathing can lead to a build-up of excess carbon dioxide in your tissues, which contributes to oxidative stress, inflammation and acidification in your body—the foundations for disease.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Session \_\_\_\_\_

### Guided Nutrition Program

# Stress Management Goal Worksheet

Goals:

Strategy:

1.)	1.)
2.)	2.)
3.)	3.)