

The Wellness Express



Jump on the train to good health

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6 Strategies to Overcome Worry

Presented by:

As 2011 approaches, people are finding it tough to be optimistic. With ongoing economic uncertainty, worry is a fact of daily life for many.

Science reveals some people are more wired for worry than others. This can be a result of several factors, including genetics, environment and upbringing. From a biological standpoint, consistent worriers may have highly sensitive autonomic nervous systems. Their brains may also be less sensitive to stress controlling neurotransmitters.

Whether you are a chronic or occasional worrier, you find that worry causes a feeling of helplessness and vulnerability, as if it has you in a tight grip, and you can do nothing to escape. But worry is actually a very treatable condition. Even if you have a biological disposition for worry, you can still tackle troublesome thoughts and lower your stress level. Try the following techniques ...

1. Write Away Your Worries

When they constantly float around your brain, worries seem intangible. Writing down your worrisome thoughts gives you more control over them. Write down possible solutions for each concern. In one study, group participants wrote down their worries over a 14-day period.

When they reviewed their lists after two weeks, the participants found that 85% of their worries never came to pass.



2. Cut Yourself Some Slack

When you write about your worries, you often find self-criticism is a key voice in your internal dialogue. Self-criticism lowers self esteem and increases the risk for depression. According to psychologist and author Matthew McKay, "By attacking yourself, you are helping destroy the number one requirement for healthy change - a sense of worth. Self attack actually reduces your capacity for change, for trying, for reaching out. Far from pushing you to do better, it exacerbates your sense of helplessness."¹ So, be gentle with yourself.

Exercise of the Week

Cobra Pose – Spinal Extension
Difficulty: Easy - moderate

(Consult your chiropractor before doing this or any other exercise.)

Start: Place a mat on the floor. Position your body as shown in Image #1, with spine in a neutral position.

Exercise: Try to move spine into a fully extended position. Concentrate on lowering hips right to the floor, relaxing the muscles of spine. Support upper body with your arms straight. Bring chin up toward the ceiling. Hold for 15-60 seconds. Return to neutral position and rest for 15 seconds. Repeat 5X.



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3. Be Mindful

We spend much of our present time ruminating about our past or fearing for the future. The concept of mindfulness is focusing on the present moment, without judgment or self-evaluation. Although it is an ancient concept, mindfulness has found wide spread adoption today among health professionals. “As you focus on becoming more peaceful with where you are, rather than focusing on where you’d rather be, you begin to find peace right now, in the present,” said psychologist and author Richard Carlson.²

4. Meditate

Meditation is a great way to boost mindfulness. Meditation techniques vary, but nearly all meditative disciplines place an importance on deep breathing. This helps relax the body and mind.

If you are a meditation beginner, set aside 15 minutes twice a day to meditate. Morning and evening usually work best. Choose a place where you will not be disturbed. After settling into a comfortable position, breathe deeply. To help keep your concentration, gently focus your eyes on an object, such as a lit candle. When you first start meditating, you encounter intruding thoughts. Accept this as part of the process. Allow these thoughts to float away; return your focus to your breathing.

5. Play Time Warp

Imagine yourself one year from now. Now from this point of view, look back at your current problems. Do they seem as difficult or scary as they do today? Or have you blown your worries out of proportion? Frequently, you will side with the latter.

6. Be Grateful

Gratitude can have a profound effect on calming fears, reducing envy and cooling anger. When you look at the rest of the world, where hundreds of millions of people struggle every day to find enough food to eat and clean water to drink, most of us in North America have much to be grateful for. One study revealed that people who kept a gratitude journal were significantly happier than those who did not.³ Gratitude creates a healthier perspective and a more hopeful outlook on life.

Your chiropractor knows all too well the damage worry can do to your body. When you are under stress, you develop an increased sympathetic tone in the nervous system. This response causes muscles to tighten and joints to become compressed, restricted and painful. When it affects the joints of the spine, stress creates vertebral subluxations.

By correcting subluxations, your chiropractor also helps restore a more natural tone in the nervous system, resulting in improved function in many bodily systems.⁴ Keep stress damage to a minimum by getting regular chiropractic adjustments.



Quote to Inspire

“Difficulties mastered are opportunities won.”

- Winston Churchill

References and Sources:

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3. The How of Happiness: A New Approach to Getting the Life You Want - Sonja Lyubomirsky, Penguin Books, copyright 2008.
4. Bakris G, Dickholtz M, Meyer PM, Kravitz G, Avery E, Miller M, Brown J, Woodfield C, Bell B. Atlas Vertebra Realignment and Achievement of Arterial Pressure Goal in Hypertensive Patients: A Pilot Study. *Journal of Human Hypertension* 2007 (May); 21(5): 347-352.



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