

Stress Awareness Handbook



••• V I V O •••
V I B R A N T
H E A L T H

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Nutrition and Lifestyle are Vital for Vibrant Health

Understanding your body, and knowing how to correctly take care of it, is key to your health and happiness.

I support clients the following ways:

- ✓ create personalized step by step nutrition and lifestyle programs to transform health goals into permanent changes.
- ✓ detailed health assessment and continuous support.
- ✓ share life changing health information backed by science.
- ✓ increase awareness of early health symptoms and reduce the risk of symptoms worsening or developing disease.
- ✓ empower people to take health into their own hands.
- ✓ help people get their lives back on track and reach their potential.



Each person is biochemically unique. What works for one person may not work for another. I look at each person as a whole, focusing on nutrition and physical health, and also on circadian rhythm, hormesis, environmental toxins, emotional, mental and spiritual factors.

Everyone is capable of making positive, long lasting changes in their own life.

Modifying your diet and lifestyle habits WILL make you FEEL different!

When you love yourself enough to put yourself and your health first, EVERYTHING in your life will benefit and in turn benefit those around you.

Kim Talbot CHN, MSc

Certified Holistic Nutritionist and Lifestyle Wellness Consultant

If you want to work with me, contact me at:

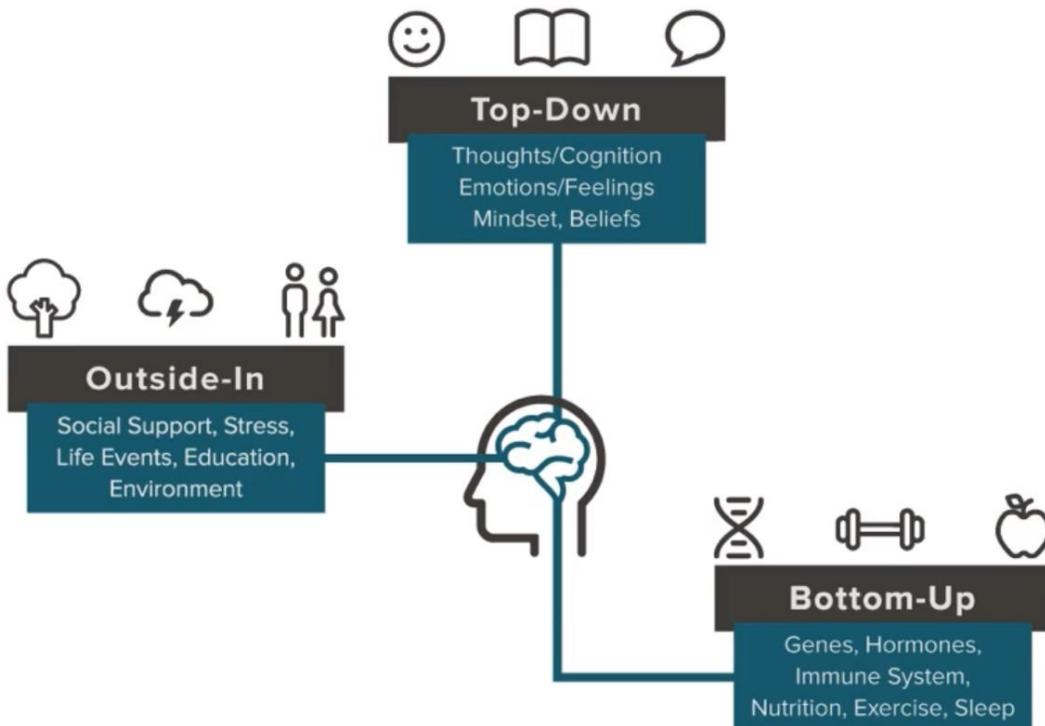
Vivo Vibrant Health: 604-441-4971 or

vivovibranthealth@gmail.com

vivovibranthealth.com (coming soon)

Learn More About Stress and Stress Reduction

Chronic stress is a huge topic, there are so many things that can be perceived by the body as a stressor. Our bodies react to physical and emotional stress that can be divided into three categories shown here (diagram from The Neuroscience Academy).



If you are interested in learning more about stress, its impact on our bodies, the following webinars are available that focus on how these topics are related to stress, the relevant science, and will finish with targeted stress reduction techniques:

- Nutrition, hydration and supplements -the stress connection.
- Exercise, posture and sauna – the stress connection.
- Strengthening the vagus nerve and the limbic system for stress reduction.
- How to boost your mitochondria for more energy and reduce stress.
- How to optimize neurotransmitters for better moods.
- Optimize circadian rhythm and sleep to reduce your stress.
- Beneficial stress (hormesis), why we need it, and how to do it.
- Essential oils, forest bathing and nature for stress reduction.
- The science of tapping and how to do it (aka the emotional freedom technique).
- The science of yoga and movement and a short gentle yoga practice.

Assess Your Stress: POMS Questionnaire

The Profile of Mood States (POMS) questionnaire is a wide-spread research tool used to measure psychological well-being at work. There are a few different versions, and this one is a shorter adaptation for quick self-assessment. It aims to increase self-awareness of your thoughts and feelings throughout the day. If you notice many negative feelings, you may want to consider making changes to your mindset and work environment to reduce your daily stress levels.

Tick the boxes that best describe how you often feel, now and/or in the past week:

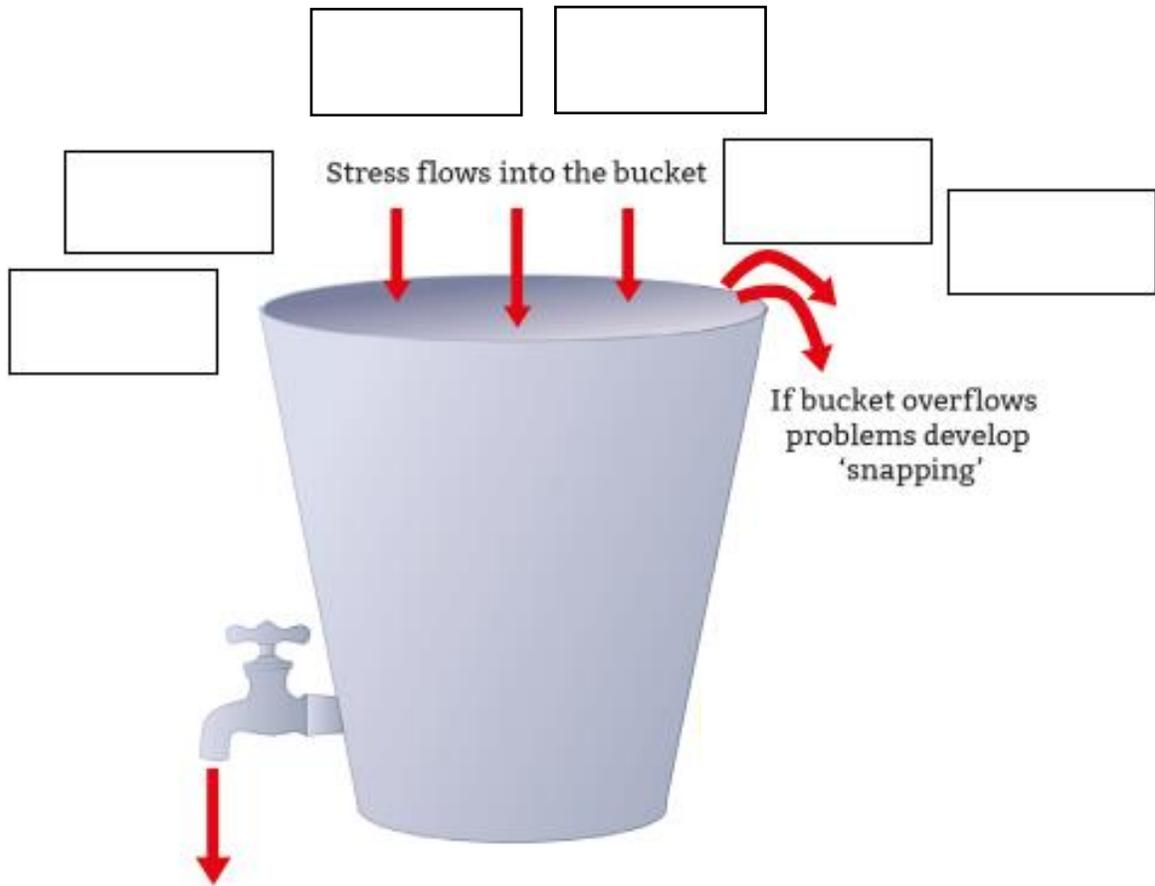
Key: 1 – not at all 2 – a little 3 – moderately 4 – quite a lot 5 – extremely

Feeling	1	2	3	4	5	Feeling	1	2	3	4	5
Lively						Unable to concentrate					
Vigorous						Bewildered					
Energetic						Forgetful					
Alert						Uncertain about things					
Full of pep						Uneasy					
Active						Anxious					
Satisfied						Listless					
Competent						Weary					
Confident						Exhausted					
Cheerful						Sluggish					
Chippy						Worn out					
Happy						Fatigued					
Calm						Slowed					
Relaxed						Bushed					
Proud						Dazed					
Angry						Confused					
Annoyed						Demoralised					
Nervous						Hopeless					
Peeved						Discouraged					
Bad-tempered						Helpless					
Furious						Worthless					
Spiteful						Embarrassed					
Tense						Ashamed					
On-edge						Sad					
Grouchy						Unhappy					
Resentful						Miserable					
Bitter						Half-hearted					
Restless						Broken hearted					

If you ticked more than 5 negative emotions, you may be experiencing chronic stress. If this is the case, you would likely benefit from using stress reduction techniques.

How Full is Your 'Stress Bucket'?

In this exercise, use the empty boxes below to think about what stress factors fill your "stress bucket" and then what good and bad coping strategies you have.



Good Coping				
Bad Coping				

Five Self-Care Essentials for Stress Reduction

Our busy, multi-tasking lifestyles often leave too little time for healthy meals, exercise and relaxation. The sad truth of the matter is that living a hectic, on-the-go lifestyle leads to some form of eventual burn out including exhaustion, depression and illness.

When chronic stress is left unchecked then it can lead to a cascade of negative effects on the body. Modern stress manifests in a myriad of ways (work stress, raising children, EMF's from mobile phones and computers, financial stress, infections, food intolerances, etc.), and these stresses are often constant. An integrative approach to stress management is needed to address all the areas where stress can appear. Focusing these five categories will help to reduce your stress 'bucket'.



Meditation For Stress Reduction



Mental and physical stress causes increased levels of the stress hormone cortisol. This produces many of the harmful effects of stress, such as the release of pro-inflammatory cytokines. These effects can disrupt sleep, promote depression and anxiety, increase blood pressure, contribute to fatigue and cloudy thinking, and lead to exhaustion and illness.

Numerous studies have shown that mindfulness meditation can reduce the emotional and physical symptoms of stress, and even reduce the inflammatory response and lower cortisol levels. Research has also shown that meditation may improve symptoms of stress-related conditions, including irritable bowel syndrome, post-traumatic stress disorder and fibromyalgia. So why not give it a try. Here I have listed my favorite meditation resources for you to explore:

Mini Meditations:

<https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-18510/5-mini-meditations-you-can-do-in-1-minute.html>

Guided Meditations:

<https://mrsmindfulness.com/>

<https://www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditations/>

Jon Kabat-Zinn 20 min, beginner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbXUAg5tA0s>

Jon Kabat-Zinn body scan meditation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4gZgnCy5ew>

Jon Kabat-Zinn, sitting meditation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9Z4t9ZiUzM&t=297s>

Loving kindness meditation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-d_AA9H4z9U

Heart connection meditation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rokryff_3A0

<http://www.rachelletersigni.com/meditation.html>

Free 8 Week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program:

<https://palousemindfulness.com/index.html>

Meditation Apps:

<https://www.wellandgood.com/good-advice/apps-for-meditation>

<https://info.lululemon.com/features/this-just-in/six-meditation-apps-you-need-to-try-now>



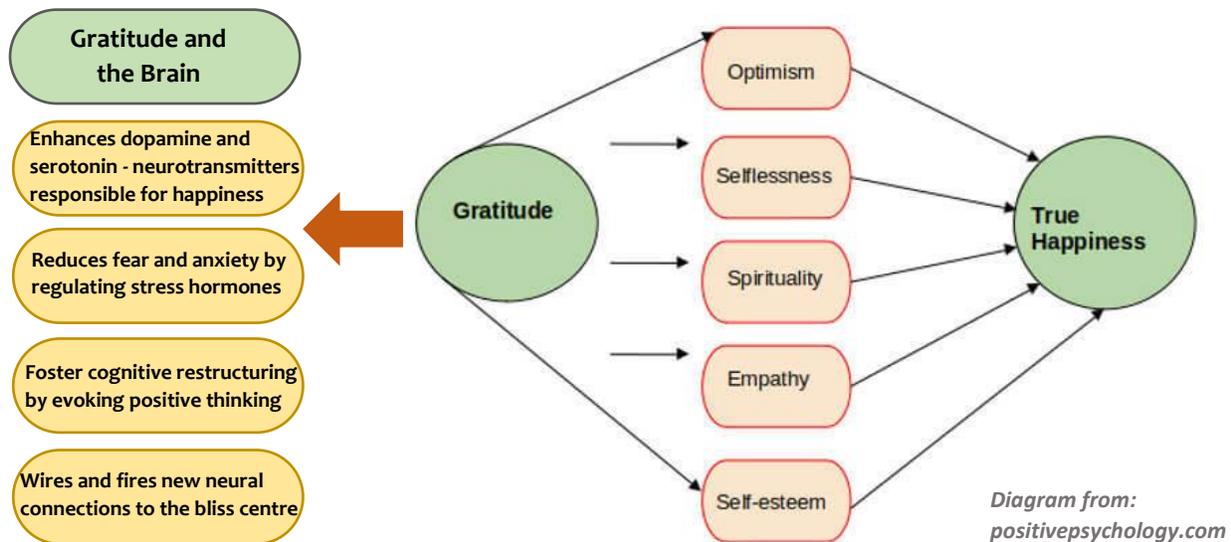
How to Cultivate Gratitude

Gratitude doesn't make our problems disappear, but it helps them feel more manageable.

To get the benefits of gratitude, we need to practice it consistently. Set an intention to practice gratitude even when you don't feel like it. Gratitude is easy when things are going well, but when problems are piling up, and the world seems to be falling apart, it's hard to feel grateful. If you're struggling to find something to thankful for, start small. There are always things to be grateful for, even on our darkest days, it takes effort, but the reward is great. Try to identify one good thing – a supportive person, a comfy sweater, a hot shower, or your favorite cup of tea.

Scientists have measured brain activity and found that gratitude causes synchronized activation in multiple brain regions, lights up parts of the brain's reward pathways and the hypothalamus, and boosts neurotransmitters serotonin and dopamine. Regularly expressing gratitude literally changes the structure of the brain, keeps gray matter functioning, makes you healthier and happier, boost your immune system, improves your relationships, and can make you more productive. The more you do it, the easier it becomes as you are create and reinforce positive neural connection in the brain. "Neurons that fire together wire together".

"Trying to think of things you are grateful for forces you to focus on the positive aspects of your life. This simple act increases serotonin production in the anterior cingulate cortex."



With practice it will become easier to identify the things you're grateful for and you'll develop an open and joyful heart, as well as a greater appreciation for yourself and the world around you.

Tips for practicing gratitude:

Have fun, be creative, be consistent. There's no wrong way to do it.

Start looking for things to be thankful for everywhere.

Share what you're grateful for with someone else, a friend, work colleague or family.

How to PRACTICE gratitude

BY SALLY CHUNG

Start a GRATITUDE Journal



- jot 3 things you're thankful for before sleeping. 

Make a FAMILY (or) PERSONAL gratitude JAR



- decorate any sized jar
- place jar in a noticeable/common area w/papers + pen
- read notes on hard days

Say "thank you" more!

- it can STRENGTHEN relationships
- it can make someone's DAY!
- it reminds people they are → IMPORTANT ←

thank you for trying 

SMILE

- proven to strengthen immune system 
- makes you more confident! 
- doesn't cost \$\$\$

thank u for being there 

thank u for listening 

Spend TIME with LOVED ones



- make intentional time
- be thankful for the opportunities you have to grow closer
- remind them you care about them



@artastherapy

volunteer



- provides a bigger perspective on life 
- studies show → boost well-being, greater functionality
- helping others can help you!
- make impact in local community

Different Ways to Practice Gratitude

- ♥ Tell an employee, co-worker, family member or a friend something you appreciate about them.
- ♥ Look at yourself in the mirror and think of something you like about yourself.
- ♥ Sit in a quiet place and think about when something went well. How did that feel? Practice that feeling every day for a week.
- ♥ Next time something bad happens consider 5 good things that happened as a result of this event.
- ♥ Write someone a thank you note.
- ♥ Write it down, talk about it, think about it, re-live it, meditate.
- ♥ Rinse and repeat.

- ♥ **Keep a daily gratitude journal.**

Below are some gratitude journal prompts to get you started.



- ❖ What's something that you're looking forward to?
 - ❖ What's a simple pleasure that you're grateful for?
 - ❖ Write about a happy memory.
 - ❖ Write about someplace you've been that you're grateful for.
 - ❖ What's something about your body or health that you're grateful for?
 - ❖ Open the door or window and look outside. What's something you're grateful for outside?
 - ❖ What's an accomplishment you're proud of?
 - ❖ What's a possession that makes your life easier?
 - ❖ Open your phone or photo album and find a photo that you like. Why are you grateful for this photo? What are you grateful for in the photo?
 - ❖ What have you been given that you're grateful for?
 - ❖ What's something or someone that makes you feel safe?
 - ❖ What artist, author, or musician are you grateful for?
 - ❖ What do you like about your job?
 - ❖ How are you able to help others?
 - ❖ Write about 3 things you're grateful for today (see template).
- ❖ What public service or organization are you grateful for (i.e. the library or fire department)?
 - ❖ What book(s) are you grateful for?
 - ❖ What piece of clothing or furniture are you grateful for?
 - ❖ Write about a friend that you're grateful for.
 - ❖ Write about a teacher or mentor that you're grateful for.
 - ❖ Write about a family member that you're grateful for.
 - ❖ What did you accomplish today?
 - ❖ What's a tradition that you're grateful for?
 - ❖ What's one personality traits that you're grateful for?
 - ❖ What mistake or failure are you grateful for?
 - ❖ What skill(s) do you have that you're grateful for?
 - ❖ What's something that you bought recently that you're grateful for?
 - ❖ What's something that you made recently that you're grateful for?
 - ❖ Look around the room and write about everything you see that you're grateful for.

Gratitude Resources:

Benefits:

<https://jimkwik.com/kwik-brain-047/>

Science:

<https://positivepsychology.com/neuroscience-of-gratitude/>

<https://thehappyjournals.com/gratitude-journal-benefits/>

Templates:

<http://www.plantlovegrow.com/gratitude.html>

<http://www.plantlovegrow.com/connecting--community.html>

<https://www.pinterest.ca/gratitudejar/gratitude-journals/>

Guide:

<https://livewellwithsharonmartin.com/the-power-of-gratitude-30-days-of-gratitude-journal-prompts/>

I am grateful for



Every morning and/or evening, list 3 things you are grateful for

Sunday _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Monday _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Tuesday _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Wednesday _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Thursday _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Friday _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Saturday _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Why and How to Practice Mantra Meditation

A mantra is a word or sound that is repeated frequently out loud or in the mind that results in muting the constant chatter and noise of our thoughts.

Neuroscientists have investigated how practicing mantra meditation affects the brain and are confirming some of the health benefits of this ancient practice. In one study published in the Journal of Cognitive Enhancement, researchers measured activity in a region of the brain called the default mode network (DMN), which if overactive can mean that the brain is distracted and overexcited. Mantra meditation suppressed the DMN and this effect was reinforced with practice. This suggests that mantra practice can reduce distractions and calm brain activity in this region, helping to free your mind of background chatter and calm your nervous system.

How to start a mantra meditation:

Sit comfortably. Place your hands over your heart or on your knees and recite any of the following. Inhale as you recite the first word, exhale the second word:

Sanskrit mantra examples:

Sat nam (roughly translated as “truth is my identity”)

So hum (meaning “I am that”)

English mantra examples:

Just breathe

Love peace

Gratitude joy



Or you can create your own personal mantra that resonates with you, using any words or sounds.

Some people enjoy traditional mantras in the Sanskrit language that have a rhythm and soothing vibration created by the sound of the Sanskrit words. Others like to have one personal mantra they say every day, while others like to switch it up. Choose a mantra style and practice that works for you.

Resources:

<https://www.yogajournal.com/yoga-101/mantras-101-the-science-behind-finding-your-mantra-and-how-to-practice-it>

<https://www.yogajournal.com/meditation/so-hum-contemplation-meditation>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Perform-Mantra-Meditation>

5 minute mantra meditation for beginners: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbVh43mTHF4>

The Power of Conscious Breathing

Breathing consciously is a powerful act. The process of breathing sits directly at the interface of our voluntary nervous system (aspects of our physiology under our conscious control) and our autonomic nervous system (aspects generally not under conscious control). It's a direct path for us to communicate quickly to the brain via what we do with our body. It also offers a direct link for balancing the sympathetic (fight-or-flight) and parasympathetic (rest-and-relax) branches of the nervous system.

Alternate nostril breathing is a simple yet powerful technique that settles the mind, body, and emotions. You can use it to quiet your mind before beginning a meditation practice, and it is particularly helpful to ease racing thoughts if you are experiencing anxiety, stress, or having trouble falling asleep.

Instructions

Sit comfortably. Relax your body.

Make a "peace sign" with your right hand. Fold the two extended fingers toward the palm or rest them lightly on the bridge of your nose. Place your thumb gently onto your right nostril. Place your ring and little fingers gently onto your left nostril.

Close your eyes and begin by softly closing your right nostril (using your right thumb) and inhale slowly, deeply, smoothly and gently through your left nostril.

Close your left nostril (using your ring and little fingers) and release closure of your right. Exhale and inhale through your right nostril.

Close your right nostril and release closure of your left. Exhale and inhale through your left nostril.

This completes one round. Continue the pattern for as long as you wish. When you're finished, relax both arms, sit and breathe naturally for a few moments before opening your eyes.

Next time you sense anxiety or stress, move through a few rounds of alternate nostril breathing. It's a great way to hit the reset button for your mental state.

Resources <https://theyogospace.co.uk/blog/PostId/261/yogis-ahead-of-science-one-nostril-breathing-determines-how-you-feel>
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?cmd=Link&LinkName=pubmed_pubmed&from_uid=1938166
<https://sequencewiz.org/2014/08/06/one-nostril-breathing/>
<https://www.healthline.com/health/alternate-nostril-breathing#how-to>



Write Down Your Stress!

Worrying can be overwhelming, never ending and exhausting. A technique called the Worry Tree is a practical strategy that you can use any time, any place to bring back some form of control. Follow the four steps below:

- 1) Notice** - recognise when you're caught in a cycle of worry.
- 2) Describe** - write down your worries.
- 3) Ask yourself** - can I do anything about this?

If yes, you have identified a practical worry.

If no, you have identified a hypothetical worry.

Understanding the difference between these is crucial in deciding what we do next.

4) PROBLEM SOLVING & LETTING GO

Practical worry

Decide if you can or want to do something about this now, or later.

If you can deal with it now, decide on a course of action, and then work on letting the worry go.

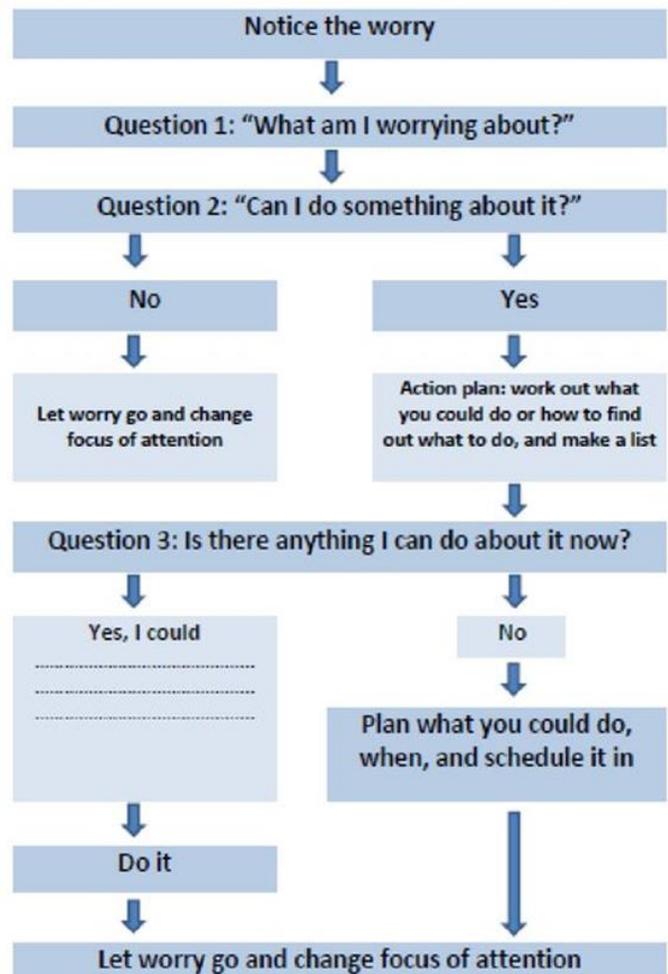
If you have a practical worry that you can't solve right now, decide when and where you are going to solve it. You now have it scheduled in and have made plans to deal with it.

Hypothetical worry

These tend to be 'what if?' worries that we can't take action on. If you can't do anything about your worry, the only thing you can do is let it go. Of course, it is not easy to just let worries go, but there are techniques out there that are useful in allowing us to move forward.

The worry tree in itself can sometimes be powerful enough to lessen anxiety.

Worry tree



Use Essential Oils For Anxiety and Stress Relief

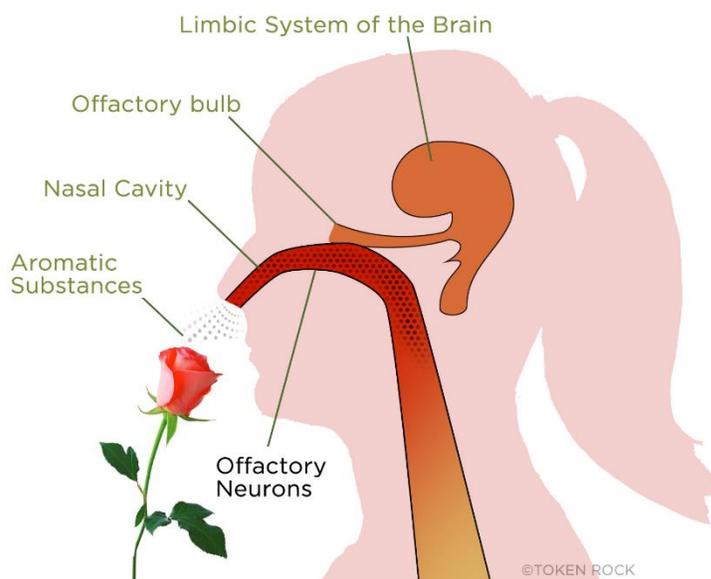
Different aromas can change your emotions and even your physical health. Scents can even trigger memories and the emotions associated with those memories. This is because the olfactory nerve in your nose that processes scents is connected to the limbic system in your brain which is in control of your memories, moods, and emotions. For this reason, essential oils can have beneficial effects on your emotional and physical health and can reduce stress.

Using essential oils can be both profoundly simple and life changing at the same time.

Aromatic Uses – just smell it!

When we inhale the fragrance of an essential oil, the odor molecules travel up the nose and trigger nerves in the olfactory bulb that then transmits impulses to the amygdala and other parts of the limbic system. The limbic system has three main components: the hypothalamus, the hippocampus and the amygdala.

Essential oils (and our sense of smell) can have profound physiological and psychological effects because the limbic system is directly connected to those parts of the brain that control heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, memory, stress levels, digestion and hormone balance. Olfactory responses to odors induce the brain to stimulate the release of hormones and neurochemicals that in turn alter the body's physiology and behavior.



Using particular oils repeatedly can help rewire habitual emotional responses to find positive emotional balance. Certain essential oils can be very enlivening while others can be calming and soothing. Everyone is different in how they respond due to their individual biochemistry and past experiences.

Essential oils for anxiety and stress

Jasmine, lavender, rose, ylang ylang, bergamot, citrus (orange, lemon, lime etc.), frankincense and sandalwood. Always use certified pure therapeutic grade essential oils.

Topical Uses

Essential oils are easily absorbed by the skin into the bloodstream and can have immediate localized benefit to the target area and throughout the body. Most essential oils need to be diluted with a carrier oil like fractionated coconut oil or almond oil.

Resources: <https://scentered.com/blogs/news/how-essential-oils-affect-your-limbic-system>
<https://medium.com/@sharondaileyshabinawauthor/the-science-behind-using-essential-oils-for-emotional-support-a34a4d1f15ae>

