



UltraWellness
Optimal Health Series

BONUS REPORT

STRESS

**How to Boost
Your Thyroid by Relaxing**
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Stress: How to Boost Your Thyroid by Relaxing

Stress and adrenal exhaustion have a profound impact on your thyroid. When you are chronically stressed out, your body produces additional cortisol and adrenalin. This increase in cortisol has a negative impact on your thyroid.

What normally happens in stressful situations is that the need for the thyroid hormone increases while your body's ability to produce it actually decreases. This can lead to a terrible downward spiral in which one system negatively affects the other, progressively putting your body more and more out of balance.

This is the reason that I suggest treating the adrenals at the same time you treat the thyroid. One way you can do this is by learning how to cope with your stress and actively relax.

Although none of us can avoid stress, we can certainly learn to manage it, and we can do this on a regular basis. Most of us do not need any help to be stressed, but we need to think actively about relaxing.

Active relaxation is different than simply sitting in front of the television or zoning out on the Internet. It involves an active process of engaging in a deep relaxation response in the body that can help to counteract the effects of the chronic alarm state we have been discussing that produces high levels of cortisol and adrenalin in your body.

This can be done through many different methods, including meditation, autogenic training, muscular relaxation, exercise, yoga, tai chi, qigong, listening to music, making love, or anything else that helps get you into that deep state of relaxation.

Deep breathing is a simple and effective modality for activating the relaxation response. It can be done anywhere, anytime. Guided imagery is also helpful. And there are other products on the market that that can help.

In this guide, I will give you a deep breathing exercise, provide a script for guided imagery to help you relax, and review a product called Freeze-Framer, which is built to help you cope more effectively with stress.

Learning how to deal with stress and actively relax can have a major impact on your thyroid. It is one of the easiest, most important, and most overlooked aspects of thyroid treatment. I strongly encourage you to use the tools here to help you boost your thyroid through relaxation.

DEEP BREATHING

Using your breath is a simple and powerful way to engage in active relaxation. The breath is the doorway to the activation of the parasympathetic nervous system (which is the antidote to the sympathetic nervous system—the alarm, or “fight-or-flight,” system). The parasympathetic system is the relaxation nervous system. It is easy

for us to get into the alarm state every day, but getting into a relaxation state requires a bit of work. Thankfully, the breath will activate that response, which slows the heart rate, lowers blood pressure, activates the immune response, and even improves thyroid function.

For most of us, our breath is shallow, irregular, and unconscious. By making your breath conscious, regular, slow, and deep, you can bring your body out of the alarm state very quickly, and the longer you do it, the deeper you will sink into relaxation.

There are many different exercises out there that help you breathe deeply to activate the relaxation response. The one given in this guide is a relatively simple version you can use almost anywhere.

Start by getting yourself into a comfortable position. If you can, it is helpful to lie on your back, but this isn't an absolutely necessary part of the exercise. Simply get comfortable, close your eyes, and feel your body relax.

As you begin to relax, focus your attention on your breath. Feel your breath naturally rise and fall. Take a moment to consider which part of your body you are using to breathe. When you inhale, does your breath fill your chest or your abdomen? If you can't tell by simply thinking about it, place one hand on your abdomen and one hand on your chest. This will help you feel which part of your body you are using to breathe.

The goal of this exercise is to breathe deeply into your **abdomen**. This means that if your chest is currently swelling more than your abdomen when you inhale, you will need to change your breathing. The way to do this is by inhaling and pushing out your abdomen at the same time. Let your abdomen instead of your lungs and chest draw the breath into your body.

Once you have started breathing with your abdomen, inhale slowly and gently to a count of 10. Hold the breath for a moment. Then slowly and gently release the breath to a count of 10. As you let go of your breath, feel all the tension in your body leave with it.

To enhance this process, you might add a one-word relaxation mantra (a word you repeat over and over) as you exhale. For example, you could simply tell yourself to "relax." If you did it this way, the exercise would look like this:

1. Inhale to a count of 10: 1 ... 2 ... 3 ...
2. Hold your breath for a moment.
3. Exhale to a count of 10: 1 ... 2 ... 3 ...
4. As you exhale, say to yourself, "R-E-L-A-X."
5. Then inhale again.

You could replace the word "relax" with any other single word that might help you let go of your tension. Some people like to say the name of a beautiful place that makes them feel serene or the location of a wonderful, relaxing vacation they once took. You could do this by saying "ocean," "forest," "Italy," or whatever other relaxing word you choose as you exhale.

You can repeat this exercise as often as you like to help yourself actively engage in relaxation. However, I suggest you do three sets of 10 deep breaths using the method described above. In between each set you can take a short break to center yourself and bring your attention back to the exercise.

If you have trouble inhaling or exhaling to a count of 10 or you begin to feel dizzy, stop immediately, take a moment to regain your focus, and then shorten the amount of time you take to inhale and exhale. The point isn't to "make it to 10." The point is simply to take long, slow, deep breaths that help you relax. If your body won't let you inhale and exhale to a count of 10, don't push it.

Once you have completed the exercise, take a few moments to bring yourself back to the present moment. Don't get up and rush back to work; you might undo some of the wonderful relaxation you have been experiencing. Instead, move slowly back into your day, taking this feeling of relaxation with you.

SPECIAL PLACE IMAGERY

Visualization is a very powerful relaxation tool. Taking time to do a guided visualization during the week, in which you visit a special serene place in your mind's eye, gives you the opportunity to unwind and enjoy the power of your imagination for a moment. In addition, it helps you burn off pounds. That's right; going to that special place in your mind will help you lose weight.

What follows is a guided meditation that I have created. But before we get into the visualization itself, there are a few rules I would like to address in regard to guided visualization. Visualization is a powerful tool, and it is best that you know how to put it to proper use if you are going to engage in these kinds of exercises. Knowing these things will help you make the most of the experience.

1. Before you begin a guided visualization, take a moment to relax and center yourself. I would recommend doing a few minutes of deep breathing before you start this exercise.
2. Take your time. Do not rush through this process. Guided visualization can be incredibly relaxing if you allow yourself the necessary time to imagine what you want to imagine. This exercise may take as much as 30–45 minutes.
3. This is an exercise in which focus is very important. If at all possible, try to reserve time and space to do it in which you will not be interrupted.
4. To make the most of the experience, you may want to record the following dialogue on tape or have a friend do it for you. That way, you can play it back while you visualize in order to enhance the experience. If you do this, make sure to leave pauses where I have marked them. This will give you the time to bring the pictures completely to mind.
5. Take time to visualize each step completely. Just relax, and enjoy how powerful your imagination is.
6. When you are done with the guided tour of your imagination, come back to your everyday life slowly. It is not advisable to immediately jump into your car and rush off to work. Not only does this inhibit the relaxation process, it can be dangerous. Most of us are not used to doing these kinds of exercises, so you may feel a little light-headed or disoriented when it is over. That's natural. Just take the time you need to adjust.
7. As you finish up, come back to this room and this moment slowly and gently.

Below is the visualization. Again, you can record this on a tape if you wish. Or you can simply memorize the exercise and take yourself through it.

Guided Visualization Dialogue

Take a moment to sit back and relax. Gently close your eyes and breathe deeply into your abdomen. Feel yourself in your body, right now, in this moment. As you breathe, allow your body to completely relax. Stress is flowing out of you with each breath. Your body is becoming limp and comfortable. Let the tension in your brow go. Let the tension in your eyes go. Let the tension in your lips go. Just relax in the comfortable darkness that surrounds you.

PAUSE

Once you feel completely relaxed and centered, start to bring yourself to one of your favorite peaceful places. This could be a place you have been before, like a silent redwood grove with cool shade and towering ancient trees that protect you in their mammoth embrace, or a white sand beach where the ocean waves gently lap the shore and the smell of the sea air makes you feel at home.

Or it could be a place built in your imagination: a lovely, slowly swaying bridge that you stand on while watching the babbling brook flow beneath it; or an ancient oak in autumn, something out of old legend, where golden leaves fall around you as you sit in the shade and watch the orange sun sink below the horizon into twilight. Wherever this special peaceful place is for you, take some time to imagine it as completely as you can all around you.

PAUSE

Once you have your special place in mind, bring yourself into the picture. Imagine that you are in that beautiful place. Put yourself there. Take a walk and look at the lovely, peaceful, relaxing surroundings. Before, you were looking at this peaceful scene as if it were a painting, from a distance. Now you are in the scene. You are living it. Be there now.

PAUSE

What do you see around you? There is no need to verbally answer this question; just look around and see what you see. What in this scene is most relaxing to you? Take a walk through this special place and appreciate all that you see.

PAUSE

What do you smell in the air? Can you smell the trees and the soil of the forest floor beneath you? Do you smell the salt air of the ocean? Bring scent into your visualization. Smell the air where you are.

PAUSE

Reach out and touch something that is attractive and peaceful to you. How does it feel? Is it soft to your touch? You are living in the scene. You can feel the ground beneath you and the air on your skin. How does it feel?

PAUSE

Now take a moment to listen. What sounds do you hear in these beautiful new surroundings? Can you hear birds chirping in the woods? Do you hear the ocean waves in their perpetual booming rhythm? Perhaps there is music from an ancient flute in the background. Or perhaps you hear the voice of an old friend that soothes and calms you. Whatever you hear, take a moment now to enjoy listening to it.

PAUSE

You can stay in this scene as long as you want to, enjoying this moment of relaxation you have taken for yourself. Feel free to walk around in this special place as long as you like. It is yours. You can change the scene as you wish.

Remember that this special place is always here for you. You can come back to it whenever you wish. You need not be afraid of losing it. It is always with you. And the relaxation that you feel right now, at this moment in your body, is yours to call on anytime you wish.

When you are ready, slowly let the scene dissolve from your mind. Allow yourself to gradually come back to the comfortable darkness that was there before you imagined your special place. When you are ready, you can open your eyes and come back to this moment in this time in this reality.

Before you get up, take a moment to feel how relaxed you are right now. Then, slowly, move on with your daily life.

FREEZE-FRAMER

The Freeze-Framer Interactive Learning System (<http://thyroid.ultrawellness.com/freezeframer>) is an easy-to-use software program, learning system, and patented heart rhythm monitor developed by HeartMath's founder, Doc Childre. The Freeze-Framer has been designed to prevent, manage, and reverse the negative effects of stress and to enable users to learn how to operate the mind-body-heart as a unified system, achieving new levels of health and well-being.

Using Freeze-Framer's fingertip or ear pulse sensor, which plugs into the USB port on your computer, you can watch in real time how thoughts and emotions affect your heart and autonomic nervous system. With the Freeze-Framer you can objectively monitor your heart rhythms and confirm when you have achieved autonomic nervous system balance. It's like a mirror of your emotional state, and this real-time feedback enables you to more effectively manage your levels of stress and negative emotions.

Benefits of Freeze-Framer

You will learn how to intentionally shift to a positive emotional state and will be able to see the changes in your heart rhythms immediately on your computer screen. These shifts in your heart rhythms create a favorable cascade of neural, hormonal, and biochemical events that benefit the entire body and mind. Blood pressure drops. Stress hormones plummet. The immune system pumps up. Antiaging hormones increase. You gain clarity, calmness, and control. The effects are both immediate and long lasting.

HeartMath research has shown that emotions are reflected in our heart rhythm patterns. The analysis of heart rate variability (HRV), or heart rhythms, is recognized as a powerful, noninvasive measure that reflects heart-brain interactions and autonomic nervous system dynamics, which are particularly sensitive to changes in the emotional state. New clinical research identifies HRV as a key indicator of preventable stress and shows a correlation with a broad range of stress-related health problems.

CONCLUSION

Stress is an inevitable part of life. We can't stop it or prevent it. But we can learn to reduce its negative effects on our health and well-being. Practicing some form of active relaxation on a regular basis—whether it is guided imagery, breathing techniques, use of the Freeze-Framer, yoga, meditation, or prayer—is an essential component of good health. Try to do something, even if it is for only 10 minutes a day. If that seems like too much, then just try five minutes of deep breathing a day. It is more rejuvenating than a coffee break and much better for you in the long run!