

Mindfulness Strategies for Relaxation and Well-being





Liliam Llanos

UPC PARENT CONSULTANT

Phone: 801.272.1051

Email: leslie@utahparentcenter.org

Website: www.utahparentcenter.org

The mission of the Utah Parent Center (UPC or Center) is to help parents help their children, youth and young adults with **all** disabilities to live included, productive lives as members of the community.

We accomplish our mission by providing peer support, training and effective advocacy based on the concept of **parents helping parents**.*

What Will You Learn?

- ✓ Stress vs. Burnout
- ✓ Common Effects Of Stress
- ✓ Signs of Burnout
- ✓ Mindfulness Practices
- ✓ Stress Reduction Strategies
- ✓ Brain Entrainment

Mindfulness practices for stress reduction that you can integrate in your day to day work and family life

How to entrain your brain to respond to and recover from stress quickly

Stress



Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the demands of life.

“Stress help us identify and respond to threats in the environment and to plan for the future. But at high levels, chronic stress and anxiety can be problematic.”

Common Effects of Stress

On your body	On your mood	On your behavior
Headache	Anxiety	Overeating or undereating
Muscle tension or pain	Restlessness	Angry outbursts
Chest pain	Lack of motivation or focus	Drug or alcohol misuse
Fatigue	Feeling overwhelmed	Tobacco use
Change in sex drive	Irritability or anger	Social withdrawal
Stomach upset	Sadness or depression	Exercising less often

Recognizing how stress may affect you physically, emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally can help you understand and manage it.

Burnout



Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and often physical exhaustion caused by prolonged or repeated stress.

In 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially classified burnout as a medical diagnosis, including the condition in its *International Classification of Diseases*. It described burnout as “a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.”

Although, we use both words stress and burnout interchangeably, leading researchers make a distinction between the two. When stressed out, you still have the ability to cope with challenging issues.

When you're suffering from burnout, it's more than just fatigue. You have a deep sense of disillusionment and hopelessness, and feel that your efforts have been in vain. You feel that life is meaningless, and small tasks feel as an insurmountable endeavor. You lack interest and motivation.

Signs of Burnout

- ❑ Disillusionment/loss of meaning
- ❑ Mental and physical fatigue and exhaustion
- ❑ Moodiness, impatience, and being short-tempered
- ❑ Loss of motivation and a reduced interest in commitments
- ❑ Inability to meet obligations
- ❑ Lowered immunity to illness
- ❑ Foggy thinking and trouble concentrating
- ❑ Feeling efforts are unappreciated
- ❑ Withdrawal from coworkers and social situations
- ❑ Hopelessness, and a helpless and depressed outlook
- ❑ Job absenteeism and inefficiency
- ❑ Sleep deprivation
- ❑ Emotional detachment from previous involvements

It's also suggested that when employees feel like they have a degree of control over their work and receive support from colleagues and superiors, the effect of burnout on work stress potentially can be minimized. But we already know that we're not always in control of many factors in the workplace and the pandemic has increased the load of work and consequently of stressors.

But there are still some steps and strategies we can follow to reduce stress and prevent as from reaching a state of burnout.

Mindfulness



Awareness of Sensations
Awareness of Feelings
Awareness of Thoughts

Moment to moment awareness without judgment

Mindfulness



It's estimated that burnout translates into a loss of anywhere from \$150 to \$350 billion annually for U.S. businesses.

The best cure for burnout is prevention.

Mind Wandering

VS

Mindful Awareness

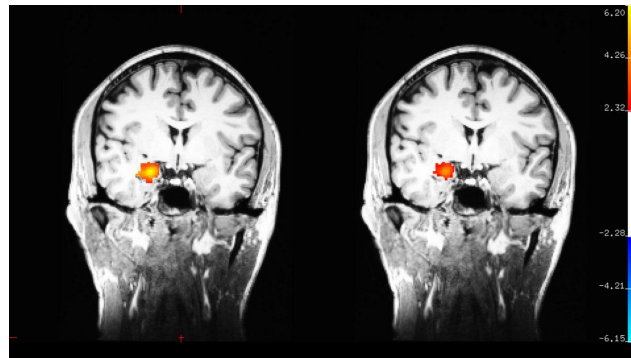
Spontaneous Mind Wandering is typically associated with Self-reflective states that contribute to:

- Negative processing of the past
- Worrying/fantasizing about the future
- Disruption of primary task performance.

Mindful Awareness is associated with:

Conscious focus in the present moment,
leading to improved task
performance and decreased
stress-related symptoms

FMRI –Before & After Mindfulness

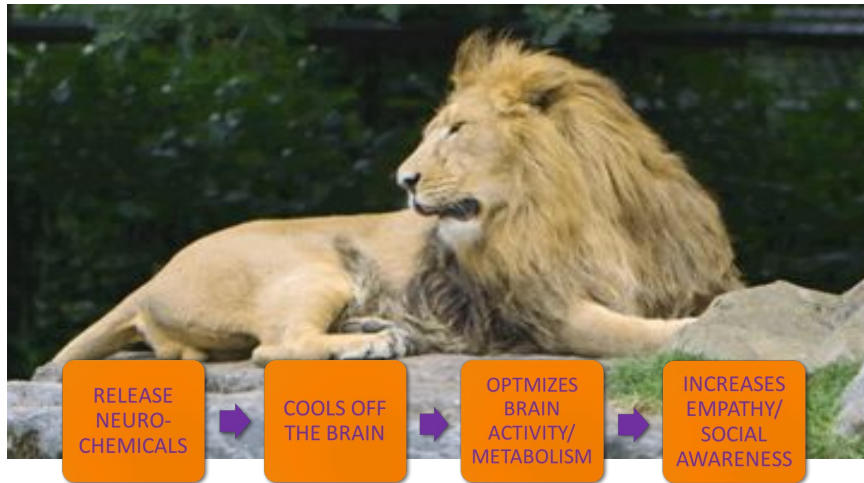


8-week Harvard Study by Gaelle Desbordes

In the mindful attention group, the after-training brain scans showed a decrease in activation in the right amygdala in response to all images, supporting the hypothesis that meditation can improve emotional stability and response to stress.

3 Ways To Reduce Stress Fast

The Fastest Way To Lower Stress



Self-Nurturing/Super Slow Movements



Self-nurturing can also be an efficient way to lower anxiety, stress, and negative thinking.

The slower you move the more you feel and the more you feel the more the brain is triggered to send a relaxation signal to that muscle.

Breathing



Physiological Sigh

Every time you make exhales longer than your inhales you calm or slow down your heart. Longer inhales speed up your heart.

Turning On 1200 Stress-reducing Genes



- ✓ Protect yourself from burnout at work
- ✓ Reduce propensity to ruminate on failure
- ✓ Be less reactive and less defensive

What Is Your Deepest Innermost



In recent several studies lead by Herbert Benson's team at Massachusetts Gen. Hospital discovered that the repetition of personally meaningful words immediately lowers psychological distress, and when continually practiced over consecutive months, will turn on 1200 stress-reducing genes, creating permanent beneficial biological changes.

Inner values can change from day to day and certain words will remain as meaningful for months or years at a time.

Different situations or areas of life may evoke different values.

You may ask yourself:

What is my deepest relationship value? Follow your intuition and write down your value words. Gaze at the list of words you've written and circle the ones that feel the most relevant and meaningful. Choose one to use as an anchor, write an affirmation you will repeat throughout the day.

What is my deepest work-related value?

Which goals on my list reflect my deepest core values?

Sunlight



The amount of bright light, ideally sunlight that you view in the morning and avoiding it between 10 pm and 4 am. will set the foundation of your mental and physical health and performance capabilities. even improving the quality of sleep.

Get some sun for at least a few minutes soon after getting out of bed. Going outside for the light is better than sitting by a window because glass filters out some of the ultraviolet light that assist the inner clock setting. For the same reason, you'll want to leave the sunglasses behind. (Of course, never stare at any light so bright it hurts.)

Finally, while morning sunlight is key, it helps to get some sunlight in the late afternoon or evening. Evening light has been shown to help anchor our clocks and encourage the correct level of melatonin, the sleep-inducing hormone.

Brain Entrainment



<https://awakeningbell.org/>

Brain entrainment

The mindfulness bell is an anchor or reminder to regularly pause, relax, and refocus on your goal. Let the ring bell one or two times an hour. The first time you hear it, just pause for 10 seconds to yawn and slowly stretch. On the next ring, take 60 seconds to yawn and slowly stretch. On the third ring, take 60 seconds to daydream or do something pleasurable before you go back to work.

After using the bell for 60-90 days, these bell strategies will become an automatic behavior deeply

embedded into the memory circuits of your brain to help you relax and refocus, and resolve problems with greater ease.

10 STRESS-REDUCING STRATEGIES

- ONE MINDFUL BREATH
- ONE MINDFUL YAWN
- ONE MINDFUL STRETCH
- ONE PLEASANT TOUCH
- ONE JOYFUL MEMORY
- ONE VALUE-BASED WORD
- ONE POSITIVE PHRASE
- ONE COMPASSIONATE THOUGHT
- ONE MINUTE OF DAYDREAMING
- ONE MOMENT OF GRATITUDE

You don't need to sit in a lotus position for a long period of time. You can reap the benefits of mindfulness even by taking brief breaks throughout the day to practice mindful awareness.



Contact Us...

801.272.1051
1.800.468.1160

www.utahparentcenter.org



References

Neural correlates of mindfulness meditation-related anxiety relief. Zeidan F, Martucci KT, Fraft RA. *Sociedad Cogn Affect Neuroscience*. 2014 June;9(6):751-9

Getting value from value. Kanter RM. *Harv Bus Rev*. 2010 Jun 14.

Neuroscience: The new Brain Science of Money, Happiness, and Success. Waldman, M, Manning, C. Diversion Books 2017

Memory Reconsolidation. Cristina M.Alberini Joseph E.LeDoux. 9 Sep. 2013

Genomic counter-stress changes induced by the relaxation response. Dusek JA, Out HH, Wohlueter AL, Bhasin M, Zerbini LF, Joseph MG, Benson H, Liberman TA. *PLoS One*. 2008 Jul 2;3 (7)e2576.

The cessation of rumination through self-affirmation. Koole, SL, Smeets K, van Knippenberg a, Dijksterhuis. *Am J Personality Soc Psych*. 1999;77:111-25.