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Mind and Body

I am quite sure you have heard enough talk about the pandemic. It all leads to a headache or stress. Here are several exercises to help fight stress.

- 1.) Yoga: The main reason that Yoga works is the combination of physical activity and mental calmness. Search for a class in your area and give Yoga a try.
- 2.) Dancing: Dance your way to a stress-free life. Dancing is a great way to increase agility, build muscle and relieve stress.
- 3.) Kickboxing: Kickboxing is not only a way to relieve stress, but you can get in shape too. Kickboxing is a combination of martial arts and boxing. It teaches proper breathing techniques and reduces stress.

"Happy New Year!"

The beginning of a new year is like going up a roller coaster slowly. Anticipating, but not knowing, where the dips and turns, and peaks and valleys lie. We are excited. Ready for that thrill of our stomach's dropping, the wind in our faces and the laughter of our riding buddies fading in the breeze. Alas, we open our eyes and realize, it's the beginning of a New Year.



Webster Dictionary defines new, as; having been seen, used, or known for a short period of time; unfamiliar. Does this sound like a new year? You bet it does. We embrace the new year with all types of resolutions and promises. There's a feeling of, "this is going to be my year". New plans are made, everyone recommits to their jobs, families and lifestyles.

As I write this newsletter, we are four days into the new year. I too, feel the release in the air. Even the days are growing longer. All of this leads us to one conclusion; the new year is a time for rebirth. It's a time get back in the game. I always say, you can't steal second base, with your foot on first. You must make an attempt, and get dirty. So, polish off that business idea. Call the local food bank and get involved. Make 2021 your year of change.

Change is hard you say? Let's start with an easy one. Start off by changing your morning routine. Instead of jumping in the shower when you get out of bed. Create your own morning affirmation. Mindtools.com says, affirmations are positive statements that can help you to challenge and overcome self-sabotaging and negative thoughts. When you repeat them often, and believe in them, you can start to make positive changes. Self-affirmation may also help to mitigate the effects of stress. My morning affirmation starts with, "The Grace of God is all over me". It's a great way to give yourself direction and purpose for the day. It doesn't have to have a spiritual tone. It can be about job growth, your family or the beautiful day that lies ahead. It's your New Year, for the most part, you control how well a year you'll have.

As you approach this new year with anticipation and some trepidation. Just remember to take it slow and easy. I don't care if you are a Nascar driver. You control how other people, your job and your family will treat you. This is the foundation for the entire year. How you begin, is how it will end. Take some stress off your life by letting people know today. I am taking a stress break and I will get back to you in 15 minutes. Enjoy your year, stress free.

Stressful Eating

Emotional eating, is eating as a way to suppress or soothe negative emotions like anger, fear, stress or loneliness.

Does any of these emotions look familiar to you? If not, don't forget these signs. The events of our times, may take emotions in a myriad of directions.

The Mayo Clinic said, "your emotions can become so tied to your eating habits that you automatically reach for a treat whenever you're angry or stressed without thinking about what you're doing."

Experts at the Mayo Clinic said the number one way to fight holiday stress is to acknowledge your feelings. If someone close to you has passed in 2020, or you can't visit a loved one. Know that it is normal to feel sadness and grief.

Food can also serve as a distraction. I know I have used food to avoid things that stress me out. Since March of 2020, I've eaten more than my share of chocolates and sweets. I know its stress eating because I find myself eating those treats late at night. Which follows an evening of watching the Network News channels.

There is no doubt that we are living in stressful times. I don't have to list all of the circumstances going on in the world and at home. You can read about that in any newspaper or magazine you read. I have made it my mission to keep current events out of this newsletter. Why you say? Because I believe you should have at least one link, to read about something other than politics. I am glad we are all in agreement.

I do want to discuss how these situations are making everyone stressed and worried. As hard as we try, we can't turn away from the obvious. What do you do when you need to check out for a few hours? I'm guessing most of you are like me. In the mornings, I'm starting to notice that tense feeling down in my stomach. Even though I know, all is well with family and friends. We must create coping mechanisms. We need ways to release the stress on our minds and bodies. For some, walking is a great stress reliever. Other folks prefer, "a good run, or laps in a pool".

Let's look at a few tips for dealing with stress. Experts say, regular exercise lowers the level of stress hormones. Exercise also helps release endorphins. Endorphins are chemicals that improve your mood and act as natural pain killers. Exercise can improve your sleep quality, which can be negatively affected by stress and anxiety.

Some medical professionals suggest using supplements that are herbal and natural. They may help manage and relieve stress and anxiety. Here are a few examples.

- Lemon balm is a supplement that increases calmness and alertness. It's a member of the mint family and have been studied for it's anti-anxiety effects.
- Ashwagandha, is a medicinal herb, it seems effective at lowering symptoms of stress and anxiety.

Some experts on stress and anxiety, suggest you connect to nature. I would have no problem with this one if I lived in California. Living in the S.E., one must always be on the lookout for Mother Nature. But I digress. Spending some time outside is a good way to relieve your worries and stress. Studies show that being in nature, or even viewing scenes of nature, reduces anger, fear, and stress, and increases pleasant feelings. Exposure to nature not only makes you feel better emotionally, it contributes to your physical well-being, reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and the production of stress hormones.

These are just a few ideas for relieving your stress and anxiety. Its going to take a while for us to get back to our, "normal" lives. In the meantime, we must find ways to make the journey less stressful and emotionally draining.

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