

STRESS REDUCTION

This is Dr. Brian Alman of TruSage (www.trusage.com) and today I want to build off of the focused breathing we've been exploring to continue on this journey of losing weight and keeping it off.

Life Can Be A Box Of Tension

Tension comes in all shapes and sizes. It might stem from work-related problems, personal relationships, family life, managing our time, financial well-being, or for a lot of us, weight issues. Perhaps your own self-confidence, motivation or your mixed feelings about your progress are bogging you down. Whatever the tension is, remember that it's natural and no one is immune from tension.

The real problem is when the tension takes over, when we can't manage the stresses and challenges that life presents. That's why knowing how to relax your way through tension is a vital skill.

Coping Skills Are Your Friend

Although there's no such thing as a tension-free life, it's possible to find ways to cope with life's stressors in positive and productive ways. In fact, you have a lot more control over these inevitable yet negative influences than you may think. And learning how to deal with your response to stress is going to make a big difference in your life, your self-care and your weight loss goals.

With the relaxation strategies you have in front of you today, you'll learn to readjust your mind so that your baseline level of stress is lower. Practicing these breathing and relaxation techniques will enable you to maintain calm and peaceful feelings throughout your day. Eventually you'll begin to discover how to use the stresses swirling through your life to help you develop more positive and creative eating habits.

Expand Your Breathing Horizons

Are you ready to move from the tension to a more relaxed, comfortable place? This breathing technique will allow you to deal with everyday stress in the matter of moments, to get you right through the tension and keep you moving forward with your goals so that taking A+ care of yourself is easier and lighter than ever before.

What I want you to do right now is focus on whatever is stressing you out. Think about it. Ruminates over it – whatever thing (or things) that's getting you tensed up. Feel the feelings. Let yourself go there, even exaggerate the tension. Talk to yourself about it, whether out loud or to yourself.

Now, take a deep breath. Inhale. Take all the stress in. Then, exhale. I want you to focus more on this part of your breathing because that's when you let go. So as you exhale, let

go; and as you let go, try switching to the opposite perspective of where you were. Instead of being tensed up about the situation, take a more relaxed approach to what's going on. Imagine that this tension is actually residing in someone else, someone outside of you. What would your attitude be about it then? You would be more removed and distant from the stress, right?

I understand if it's difficult to remove yourself from the tension and be relaxed about it. But even if there is just a spec of you that can take a relaxed approach, then we're getting closer. The most important part of this exercise is to at least be flexible enough to be open to considering the opposite perspective.

Let's try it again. Take a deep inhale. Go over the tension. Get tense about it. Whether it's related to food, relationships or work, think about the stress it brings you. Now, focusing on your exhale, let it go. Reach for a more relaxed perspective. Put some distance between you and the tension – again, as if it were happening to someone else.

Practice this as many times as you can, going back and forth from the tension to the relaxation. As you get more comfortable with this exercise, you may notice that you're freeing yourself and that the answers start to pour out – like undamning a river.

Go ahead and finish with your breathing. Use your favorite breathing technique – whether it's saying your name on the exhales or breathing colors – to wrap up your tension-reducing session.

Thank you for sharing this experience with me!

Dr. Brian Alman

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