



How to boost relaxation with mindfulness

Does stress ever get the best of you? We all tend to feel frazzled some days, especially during the hectic holiday season.

Since too much stress can be hard on the body and mind, it's important to find ways to find comfort and joy. One way that can help: practicing mindfulness.

Simply put, mindfulness involves being present in the moment and conscious of your sensations, thoughts and feelings, according to the American Psychological Association. Mindfulness may help counter stress by helping us achieve a state of relaxation, in which the mind and body are calm.

For anyone wanting to give mindfulness a try, here are some ways to get started:

- **Practice slow breathing.** While seated or lying down, gently rest one hand on your stomach. Slowly breathe in through your nose and out your mouth, feeling your stomach rise and fall beneath your hand until you feel relaxed.
- **Progressively relax your muscles.** Starting with your feet and moving to your shoulder, tense and then relax one muscle group at a time. Notice how good it feels to release the tension. Be aware of the sensations in your body too. Imagine your breath flowing to your feet, knees, arms and so on.
- **Take a mental vacation.** Visualize a scene (real or imagined) that makes you feel calm. Maybe that's a favorite vacation beach or a mountain lake.
- **Engage in mindful exercise.** Take a short walk or bike ride, focusing on the rhythm of your movements and the scenes around you.

Here are links to resources we've selected to help promote the benefits of mindfulness.

We've chosen articles on [using mindfulness for mental health](#), [the benefits of mindfulness](#), [five ways to be mindful for optimal health](#), and [mindfulness exercises to reduce stress or anxiety](#).

Plus we've picked healthy recipes from FoodHero.org for [Applesauce French Toast](#), [Butternut Apple Crisp](#), [Leek and Mushroom Orzo](#), [Cranberry Oatmeal Balls](#), and [Wild Rice with Salmon Stew](#).

Consider sharing these links with your employees as part of your health promotion activities this month.

Resources on health literacy

This month's suggested health promotional campaign in our 2022 Ongoing Condition CARE Communication Guide is designed to equip members with questions they should be prepared to ask their primary care physician or other health care provider during their next office visit.

[Click here](#) to view and download the "Get in on what's trending" poster to print and display in your workplace, [click here](#) to download a campaign flyer on sharing information with your doctor, or [click here](#) to download the health literacy campaign postcard to print and mail to members.



Want related information to print and hand out to members or attach to an email? [Click here](#) for a flyer on keeping a personal health record, [click here](#) for an overview of the basics of health literacy, [click here](#) for important health targets, [click here](#) for a flyer on common health care terminology, or [click here](#) for information about advance directives.

Help engage members with ongoing conditions

Members eligible to participate in UMR's Ongoing Condition CARE program can complete a health condition survey to begin the enrollment process.

We've provided a link to the survey below, along with language inviting members to sign up. Consider copying and pasting this message into an email to your employees to boost engagement in the program:

Looking for help to better manage your health? UMR offers expert resources and personal support to help people with certain ongoing health conditions. You may be eligible to meet with a UMR CARE nurse if you have one or more of these conditions.

[Click here](#) to answer a few questions about yourself and help us determine if this program is right for you.

