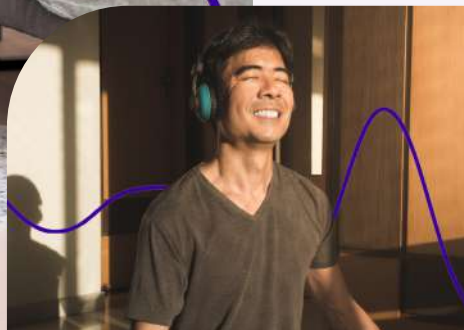
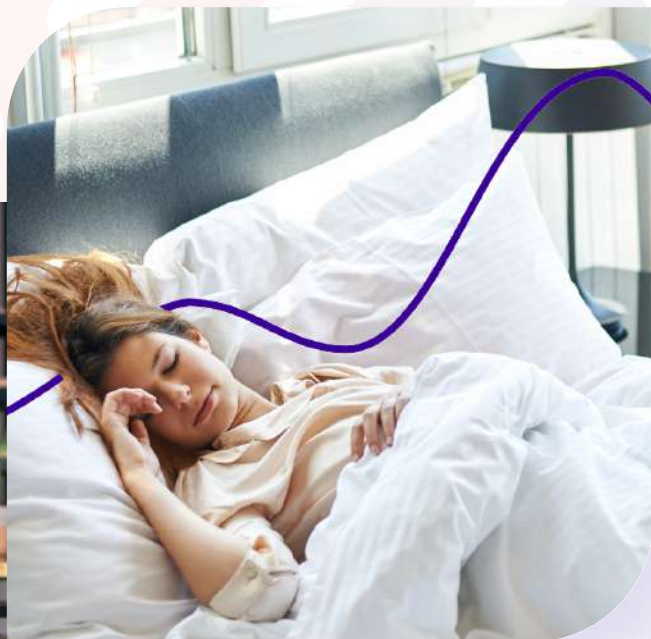




# Unlock the Secret to a Stress-Free Life in 3 Simple Steps

By: Patrick K. Porter, PhD

Neuroscience expert, Founder and CEO of BrainTap



If I told you that you could be free from your overloaded life of stress and frustration, and at the same time you could have abundant energy, feel optimistic each day, sleep like a child every night, and be able to follow your passions and live your dreams, would you believe me?

Most people would tell me I have a few loose screws. And why wouldn't they? Everywhere they turn they see massive stress. In their personal lives, they have high mortgages, credit card debt, housework, taxes, crying babies or wayward teens, marital troubles, and more. On the job, they have difficult coworkers, lengthy meetings, disagreements with management, technology meltdowns, cell phones that now keep them chained to work no matter where they go, and more to do than is humanly possible. They look into the world and see overloaded people taking desperate, unthinkable actions. They see communities divided, violence in their neighborhoods, shootings in schools, corrupt and immoral politicians, soaring gas prices, and fear-mongering media. How can anyone find freedom from stress in all that?

Yet I contend that this kind of freedom exists, and I believe everyone has the right to have it, along with the right to follow his or her own passions and enjoy a healthy, happy, abundant life. Within this ebook, I'm going to reveal exactly where to go to get this kind of freedom, how to use it to improve your life, why it works, and how others have used it to change their lives and the world.

A study done in London by the Lancet Commission showed that by the year 2030, mental health challenges are going to cost the global economy a hefty \$16T. This is 500 times the amount of money needed to solve world hunger by 2030<sup>1</sup>. Is there an underlying cause of this crisis?



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<sup>1</sup>The Lancet Commission | Volume 392, Issue 10157, October 2018 P1553-1598.

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# Conquering the Silent Enemy: Empowering Your Mind and Body to Overcome Stress

People of all ages, rather than feeling supported, are lonely, frazzled, and distracted. I see these escalating stress levels in our society as a matter of grave concern. The elusive nature of stress makes it a pervasive part of our daily lives, affecting us in ways that we often don't realize. It is not the circumstances of our lives that necessarily create stress; it's our perception and reactions to those situations. Sadly, the impact of stress on our health, productivity, and overall quality of life is far more destructive than most people realize.

The concept of brain fitness is integral to combating this silent enemy. Brain fitness—our mind's capacity to operate effectively—is intrinsically connected to physical fitness. Our brain regulates our thoughts, emotions, and reactions, playing a critical role in managing stress. By engaging in regular mental exercises, we can enhance our brain fitness, bolster our cognitive abilities, and significantly reduce stress. By integrating these steps into our daily routine, we can promote our mental and physical health, manage stress effectively, and journey towards a healthier, stress-free life.

My goal is for you to change your life so that together we can change the world. I know this is possible because we all have the capacity to change the world. The reality, however, is that we can't change the world until we learn how to change our own lives. As you practice the steps outlined in this ebook, I see you experiencing an awakening; I see you discovering how, by using the power of your mind, along with certain universal principles, you can change your life far more easily than you ever dreamed possible. I see you living a life of awe and wonder as you realize that your mind needs only to see an image of what you truly want for you to have it. I also see you experiencing the true joy that comes when you fall in love with your life and the world in which you live when you discover the limitlessness of the boundless universe.



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## So, What is Stress Anyway?

For starters, I can tell you what it's not. It's not tangible; it's not something you can point to and say, "There, over there, that's stress." You can't go to the corner drug store and ask the pharmacist for a pint of stress. Stress is a symptom of cause and effect. It's created out of our reactions to situations or events.

It may surprise you to know that the circumstances of our lives don't determine our level of stress. Our thoughts and actions are what control the amount of stress in our lives. Therefore, stress is not something that happens to us; rather, it happens through us. In other words, stress is something we create in our own lives.

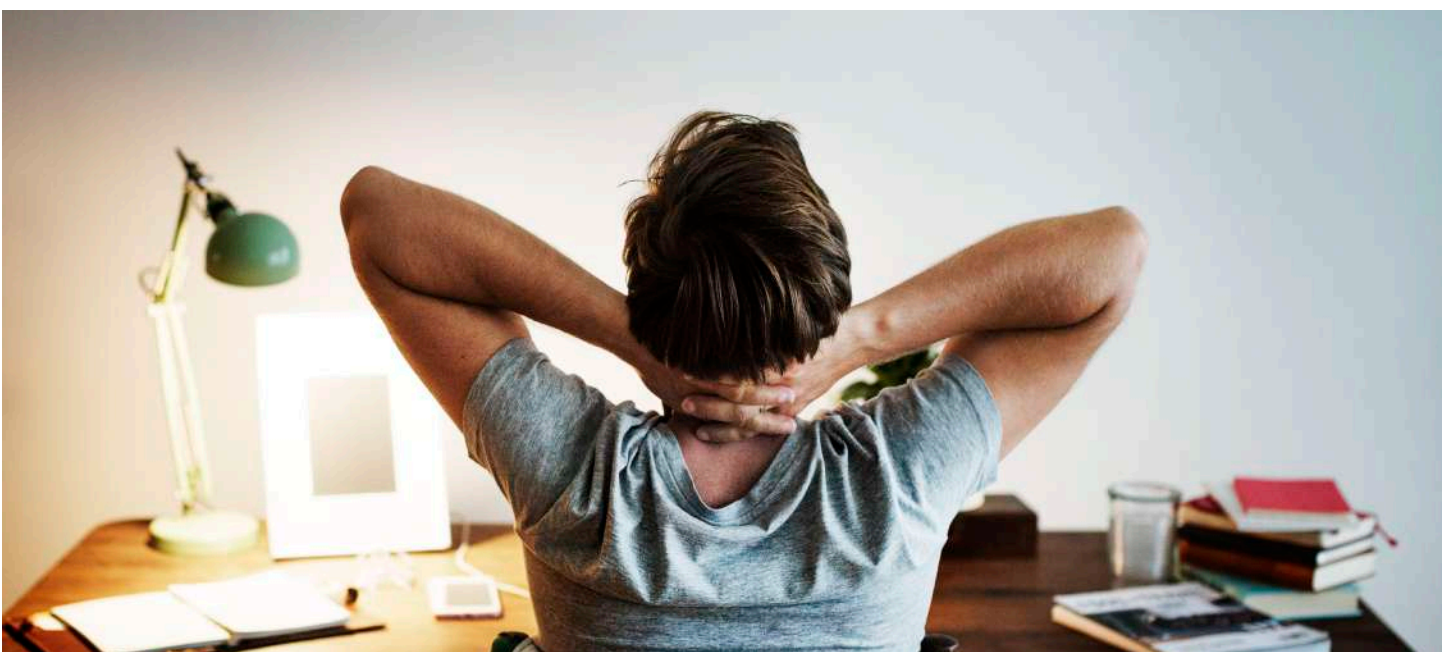
The medical community defines stress as a physical or psychological stimulus that produces a physiological reaction. These reactions may lead to poor physical, mental, or emotional health. When the human body is healthy, it's in a state of homeostasis, which means it is in a continuous stable condition. Stress disrupts homeostasis and is usually triggered by distressing or fear-related experiences, either real or imagined.

How many times have you uttered these words: “I’m really stressed out today”? These are not words to be ignored. The effects of stress on our health, productivity, and quality of life are more devastating than most people want to admit. In fact, according to the National Institutes of Health, up to 90% of all illnesses are caused by direct or indirect stress.

How often do you complain about that aching shoulder, pain in your neck, nagging headache, or upset in your stomach? Before you shrug it off as “just stress,” think again. Stress typically shows up at your weakest point, though it actually affects your entire body. Long-term stress can make you old before your time or, worse yet, can make you ill. Not a single part of your body is safe from its devastating effects—the heart, brain, muscles, immune system, joints—every single cell of your body is affected by stress, making you vulnerable to illness, disease, pain, or all three. A variety of variables will determine where stress shows up in your body including genetics, lifestyle, and the kinds of stress you experience each day.

**The stress of work, family life, and personal challenges suppress the immune system.** Therefore, it is of vital importance that we all incorporate a program of stress reduction and relaxation into our everyday life experiences. By minimizing anxiety and stress, and facilitating relaxation, we can optimize our immune systems and operate from a place of unlimited resources.

Some people are born with the ability to remain calm in a stress-filled world, but these days they are few and far between. This ebook is for those of us who need help to relax, revitalize, and rejuvenate. It’s also for those of us who want to stay positive in a world filled with negativity, and it is for those of us who yearn to make the world a better place in which to live.



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# Why is Stress the Silent Enemy?

Our bodies have a built-in stress response which is a natural part of our physiology. This physical reaction, known as the fight-or-flight response, is triggered whenever we encounter a stressful or fearful event. Harvard physiologist Walter Cannon coined the term fight-or-flight response. He says that our brains are hardwired to fight or flee as a part of the genetic wisdom that protects us from physical harm. External circumstances trigger the fight-or-flight response, but it can also be set off by extreme worry or fear.

This response corresponds to an area of our brain called the hypothalamus, which, when activated by a stressful event, starts a sequence of nerve cell firings and chemical releases that prepare our body to either run or fight.

The release of chemicals into the bloodstream, like adrenaline, noradrenaline, and cortisol creates a dramatic physical change. The respiratory rate increases. Blood is directed away from the digestive tract and into muscles and limbs where added energy is needed to run or fight. The pupils dilate and sight sharpens. Awareness intensifies and impulses quicken. The perception of pain diminishes. In other words, the body prepares itself—physically and mentally—for fight-or-flight.

Throughout early human development, the fight-or-flight response was critical for survival. When a caveman encountered a man-eating tiger, he needed the energy and intensified awareness to fight off the animal or run away.

In our modern world filled with high-pressure jobs, traffic, family challenges, and financial concerns, but very few wild tigers, the fight-or-flight response is rarely triggered by actual physical danger. Instead, worry, fear, and anxiety are what prompt most instances of fight-or-flight today.

By its very nature, the fight-or-flight response bypasses the logical left brain. This is because our early ancestors didn't have time for a logical debate when a man-eating tiger was a few feet away licking its chops. In today's world, however, bypassing the logical mind can cause distorted thinking and exaggerated feelings of anxiety or fear. One may overreact to the slightest comment, or fall into the habit of catastrophizing even the smallest concerns.

Catastrophizing is the habit of building fear up in your mind until you come to expect disaster. For instance, you hear on the radio that a severe storm is approaching. While taking precautions is a good idea, the catastrophizing person starts creating what-if scenarios until the fear becomes irrational or turns into panic. What if a tornado hits? What if your spouse gets in an accident on the way home? What if your home is blown to bits with you in it?

It's next to impossible to foster a positive attitude while catastrophizing or when trapped in survival mode. When access to the logical part of your mind is denied, it's not realistic to expect you to make clear choices or understand the consequences of those choices.

Researchers are now finding that when there is a collective buildup of stress hormones that are not properly metabolized over time, toxicity and disorders of the autonomic nervous system can occur, often resulting in chronic illnesses such as migraine headaches, irritable bowel syndrome, or high blood pressure. One is also at higher risk for disorders of the hormonal and immune systems, resulting in chronic fatigue, depression, and diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, allergies, and, yes, even cancer.

You may be thinking, "I really never feel that stressed out." Keep in mind that it's possible for excessive stress not to show up as the feeling of being stressed. Stress often goes directly to the body and may only be recognized by the symptoms it creates such as headaches, depression, anxiety, or disease. Are you starting to see why stress is your silent enemy?



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# How Does Stress Affect the Body?

As I mentioned earlier, stress is not something that happens to us, it is something we create in our own lives. Let's take a look at some of the physical responses your body can have to stress, how getting overloaded affects your health, and why reducing stress is so essential to your well-being.

## ○ Stress Trouble Spot #1: The Heart

Whenever the fight-or-flight response is triggered, whether through real or imagined stress, an increase in heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing delivers more oxygen faster throughout the body. At the same time, a rapid release of glucose and fatty acids into the bloodstream occurs. This is how your body can respond with strength and stamina during an emergency.

Chronic stress, however, can lead to high blood pressure and undue strain on the heart. The added glucose, if unused by the body, can cause elevated or erratic blood sugar levels. These blood sugar swings can make you feel fatigued and can lead to diabetes. Stress also prompts the body to release cortisol, which can cause a build-up of cholesterol in the arteries. The bottom line: stress can contribute to cardiovascular disease.

## ○ Stress Trouble Spot #2: The Brain

Are you one of those people who work best on deadlines? Do you use stress as a motivator? If so, you may be doing long-term harm to your brain that could cause early memory loss or may even lead to Alzheimer's Disease.

You may thrive on stress because of the short-term brain boost of glucose your brain gets when you're under the gun. When this happens, your senses are heightened and your memory improves. Problems start when stress lasts more than two hours. That's when the body assumes you need more physical strength than brain power and starts sending the glucose back to the muscles, leaving your brain short of glucose. At the same time, stress hormones impair neuron functioning. Another part of the brain, the hippocampus, associated with learning and memory, can get smaller over time due to the loss of glucose and damage to neurons. Researchers don't know the full effect of a shrinking hippocampus, but they do know that it can make you forgetful and muddle your thinking.

## ○ Stress Trouble Spot #3: The Immune System

Whenever the fight-or-flight response is triggered, stress hormones course through your body and signal non-essential functions to stop or slow down so that all systems essential to dealing with an emergency receive an extra boost of energy. Your immune system is not required for urgent activity. Therefore, it temporarily stops or slows down during peak stress periods. This system works out fine when the stress is short-term, but when the stress hormones keep pouring in, your immune system suffers, making you vulnerable to infection.

When the immune system is suppressed, it doesn't just go back to baseline, it goes below baseline, leaving the body vulnerable to just about any infection it may have been exposed to while under stress. "While it is well known in medicine that stress is hazardous to our health," says Schoen, "what is less well known is that many of us do not begin suffering from stress-related illness until after the stress is over. Many of us get sick after we finish a demanding project at work, during or after we go on vacation, or after we retire from a lifetime of fast-paced living."

## ○ Stress Trouble Spot #4: Body Fat

I once wrote an article called, "Why Stress is More Fattening than Chocolate." During my years of running weight loss clinics, I heard client after client ask me, "Why is it that my friends can gobble up everything in sight and not gain a pound, while I nibble on salads and the scale won't budge?"

With a little research, I found the answer in a powerful hormone called cortisol. Cortisol's job is to signal the body to relax and refuel after periods of stress; it's the body's way of slowing us down so that we don't burn out. After reviewing my client files, I realized that almost everyone who complained that he or she couldn't lose weight, even while dieting, lived with at least one high-stress factor that was likely causing high cortisol levels. Cortisol's message to slow down tends to make us feel tired, lethargic, and hungry. Therefore, while under the powerful influence of cortisol, we tend to want to lie around, watch television, and snack, thus the term "stress-eater", and the reason stress can be more fattening than chocolate.



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# The Stress-Free Trifecta: Unlocking the Power of Daily Transformative Practices

The 3 Simple Steps to a Stress-Free Life is a routine that takes only a few minutes a day and is designed not only to combat the stress of daily life but also usher you towards overall health and well-being. It's a trifecta of simple morning exercises, brain fitness activity, and quick and easy breathwork that can have a profound effect on reducing the effects of the fight-or-flight response and improve your life and well-being.

These steps are not one-off remedies, but a daily practice aimed at harnessing the power of brain fitness to boost your cognitive abilities, mood, and general health. The beauty lies in their simplicity and the profound benefits they offer. Daily practice can transform your life, helping you start your day with vibrancy, maintain focus and calm throughout, and end with peaceful, restorative sleep.

This routine can enhance your memory, improve decision-making, and promote a positive mindset, equipping you to deal with stress efficiently. Moreover, it can lead to better blood circulation, a stronger immune system, and improved sleep quality. But the most significant benefit? You become the master of your stress, not its victim. So, I invite you to invest this time each day for yourself. Embrace these practices, and witness the significant transformation that unfolds in your life. After all, you deserve a healthy, happy, and stress-free existence.

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# Cracking the Stress Code: Mastering the 3 Simple Steps

## ○ STEP #1 - Stress Mastery: The Morning Duo

Exercising in the morning, along with engaging in brain fitness activities, can be a powerful way to eliminate stress and improve overall well-being. Physical activity at the start of your day can release endorphins, elevate mood, and reduce stress hormones. Adding brain fitness techniques to your physical fitness routine can help to engage specific brainwave patterns and promote relaxation.

When it comes to optimizing brain health, one fitness activity stands out as a remarkable ally: aerobic exercise. Research has consistently shown that aerobic exercise has numerous benefits for the brain, including improved cognitive function, enhanced memory, and reduced risk of cognitive decline. A study conducted by Erickson et al. (2011) found that aerobic exercises, such as brisk walking or cycling, led to increased volume of the hippocampus in older adults, a region of the brain associated with memory and learning<sup>2</sup>. This suggests that engaging in regular aerobic exercise can have a profound impact on brain health and overall cognitive well-being. So, lace up those running shoes or hop on that bike, and let aerobic exercise be your gateway to a healthier and sharper mind.

If your physical condition doesn't allow for activities like running or cycling, there's no need to worry. There are alternative exercises that can still provide significant benefits for brain health. Low-impact exercises such as swimming, brisk walking, or using an elliptical machine can be excellent alternatives. These activities offer a cardiovascular workout without putting excessive strain on the joints.

Additionally, strength training exercises, such as lifting weights or using resistance bands, have also been shown to positively impact brain health. A study by Liu-Ambrose et al. (2010) demonstrated that resistance training can improve cognitive function in older adults<sup>3</sup>. So, incorporating strength training into your routine can be a valuable complement to aerobic exercise.

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<sup>2</sup>Erickson, K. I., Voss, M. W., Prakash, R. S., Basak, C., Szabo, A., Chaddock, L., ... & Kramer, A. F. (2011). Exercise training increases size of hippocampus and improves memory. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108(7), 3017-3022.

<sup>3</sup>Liu-Ambrose, T., Nagamatsu, L. S., Graf, P., Beattie, B. L., Ashe, M. C., & Handy, T. C. (2010). Resistance training and executive functions: a 12-month randomized controlled trial. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 170(2), 170-178.

Remember, the key is to find exercises that suit your physical capabilities and preferences. Consult with a healthcare professional or a certified trainer who can provide guidance tailored to your specific needs and limitations. The important thing is to stay active and engage in exercises that get your heart pumping and your body moving, regardless of the specific activity you choose.

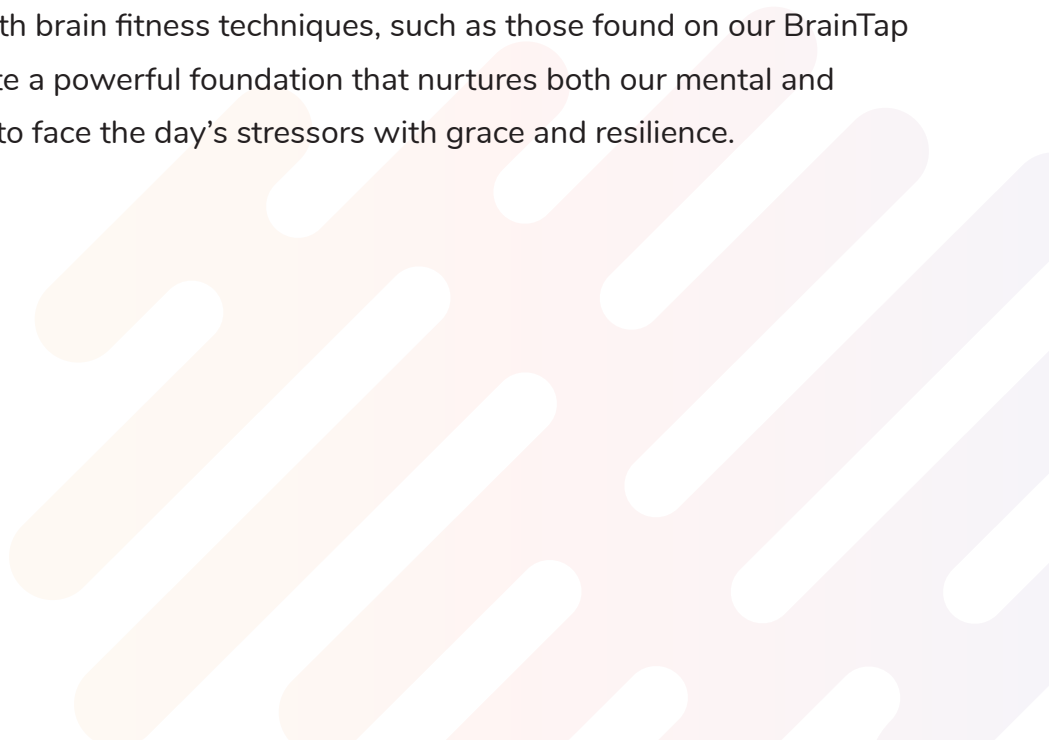
Adding a brain fitness practice to your physical fitness regimen in the morning sets the stage for a stress-free day by harnessing the power of mind-body synergy. When we engage in brain fitness exercises, such as visualization or mindfulness practices, we settle the nervous system and activate our cognitive abilities, enhancing focus, mental clarity, and emotional balance. This prepares our minds to navigate the challenges and demands of the day with greater resilience and clarity.

The simultaneous boost in the production of feel-good endorphins and neurotransmitters from physical fitness promotes unmatched feelings of calm, well-being, and focus. The release of these natural mood-enhancers primes our body for a positive and energized state, allowing us to tackle tasks and responsibilities with a sense of vitality and confidence.

The importance of a morning brain/body fitness regimen cannot be overemphasized, and it's the precise reason I developed BrainTap audio sessions specifically for the morning routine.

These relaxing BrainTap sessions take only 10 minutes and focus on engaging the sensory motor rhythm (SMR) brainwaves. SMR brainwaves serve to improve focus and concentration, and reduce anxiety. It can set a positive tone for the day, enhance your ability to manage stress even on the busiest of days, and help to ensure you sleep well that night.

By combining physical exercise with brain fitness techniques, such as those found on our BrainTap Brain Fitness mobile app, we create a powerful foundation that nurtures both our mental and physical well-being, equipping us to face the day's stressors with grace and resilience.



## ○ STEP #2 - Stress Mastery: 4-Count Box Breathing

Breathwork offers a remarkably quick and effective means of releasing stress, bringing about a sense of calm and relaxation. When we engage in intentional deep breathing, our body initiates a physiological response that positively influences our hormonal and neurotransmitter balance, paving the way for swift and effortless stress release and allowing for a renewed sense of tranquility and emotional balance. Studies have shown that breathwork techniques, such as deep diaphragmatic breathing or rhythmic breathing patterns, can stimulate the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good hormones<sup>4</sup>. These endorphins promote a sense of well-being, alleviate pain, and contribute to stress reduction. Furthermore, mindful breathing practices have been found to activate the parasympathetic nervous system and reduce the production of stress-related hormones, such as cortisol.<sup>5</sup>

Utilizing the 4-count box breathing technique in the middle of the day, or whenever an upsetting situation strikes, can be a beneficial way to release stress and regain balance.

- 1 Start by closing your eyes and focusing on your natural breath, then slowly deepen the breath until your chest remains still and only your diaphragm moves with your breathing. You may find it helpful to place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen, then pay attention to the rise and fall of your hands until only the hand on your abdomen moves.
- 2 Next, inhale deeply to the count of four and create a mental image of drawing the first line of a square box.
- 3 Hold for an additional count of 4, then add the next line to your imagined box.
- 4 Exhale for a count of 4 and add the third line to your box.
- 5 Hold the exhale for a final 4 count and finish the box.
- 6 Repeat the entire process 3 more times for a total of 4 boxes.

To supercharge this stress release, you can add a walk after you eat. Going for a walk can aid digestion, help to improve blood circulation, release endorphins, and reduce tension in the body. Combining the 4-count box breathing technique with a walk after you eat can be a powerful way to reduce stress and increase overall well-being.

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<sup>4</sup>Jerath, R., Edry, J. W., Barnes, V. A., & Jerath, V. (2006). Physiology of long pranayamic breathing: Neural respiratory elements may provide a mechanism that explains how slow deep breathing shifts the autonomic nervous system. *Medical Hypotheses*, 67(3), 566-571.2.

<sup>5</sup>Tang, Y. Y., Ma, Y., Fan, Y., Feng, H., Wang, J., Feng, S., ... & Sui, D. (2009). Central and autonomic nervous system interaction is altered by short-term meditation. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 106(22), 8865-8870. ¶

In the afternoon, taking advantage of one out of the 2000+ sessions on the BrainTap mobile app can help to reboot your brain and reset its function in just 20 relaxing minutes. The brainwave entrainment protocol used for the BrainTap headset and audio lessons shows participants experienced a 38.5% improvement on the stress index scale and 27.3% improvement on overall neurological markers.<sup>6</sup>

A mid-day BrainTap session can be especially useful for those who experience an afternoon slump, reducing stress and improving productivity.

## ○ STEP #3 - Stress Mastery: 4-8 Breathing Technique

Breathwork before bed using the 4-8 breath technique can be an effective way to reduce stress and promote relaxation. This technique involves inhaling for a count of 4 and exhaling for a count of 8, which can slow down the heart rate, calm the mind, and induce a sense of peace and tranquility.

By focusing on your breath, you can quiet your mind and release any tension in your body, allowing you to fall asleep more easily and improve the quality of your sleep.

- 1 Find a comfortable position in bed with your eyes closed. Focus on your natural breath, then slowly deepen the breath until your chest remains still and only your diaphragm moves with your breathing. Like in Step 2, you may find it helpful to place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen.
- 2 Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose for a count of 4, allowing your belly to expand as you inhale.
- 3 Hold your breath for a count of 2.
- 4 Exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of 8, allowing your belly to contract as you exhale.
- 5 Repeat this process for several minutes, focusing on your breath and letting go of any thoughts or worries that may be causing you stress.



With regular practice, the 4-8 breath technique can become a valuable tool in reducing stress and promoting relaxation before bedtime. Consider also spending a few minutes focusing on gratitude for the blessings in your life.

Finally, using BrainTap's sleep sessions, also found on the BrainTap: Brain Fitness mobile app can help to eliminate stress and promote deep sleep. These sessions are encoded to guide the brain into the delta state, which are the waves associated with very deep relaxation and a calm mind and body, leading to a deep, restful, and rejuvenating sleep. The deep stage of sleep is when the brain cleanses itself, which is key to maintaining a healthy, highly functional brain.

I want you to remember this: Taking time for yourself each day is not only okay, but essential to good health and vitality. We often get so entangled in our daily obligations and societal pressures that we neglect our most fundamental duty – taking care of our own well-being. Remember, you can't pour from an empty cup. Self-care isn't a luxury; it's a necessity. By incorporating these three easy steps into your routine, you are actively choosing to prioritize yourself, and that is a powerful decision.

The path to a stress-free life may require effort, but the rewards are immeasurable: tranquility, productivity, and happiness. Your brain, just like your body, needs regular exercise to stay fit and healthy. Stress management isn't just about avoiding the negatives, but also about accentuating the positives. So, take this journey with me, for every step you take is a step towards a life of serenity, fulfillment, and joy. You deserve to live a life filled with calm, productivity, and happiness. Let's embrace this journey to brain fitness together – your healthier, happier, and stress-free life awaits you.



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Hello, I'm Dr. Patrick Porter, the creator of the BrainTap: Brain Fitness app, a revolutionary tool designed to enhance and optimize your brain's performance. The BrainTap app harnesses the power of frequency following response to balance brainwaves, restore brain chemistry, and rebuild pathways, thereby enhancing your brain fitness and improving your overall well-being.

The BrainTap app is home to hundreds of specially designed sessions that guide your brain through a broad range of frequencies, enabling you to master your mood, sharpen your mind, sleep better, and more. You can tailor your experience to suit your needs, whether you're looking to improve your focus, reduce stress, or boost creativity.

If you're ready to take the first step toward improved brain fitness and a better quality of life, I invite you to try the BrainTap: Brain Fitness mobile app free for 14 days. That's right, you'll have two full weeks to experience the transformative power of BrainTap firsthand. You'll be amazed at how quickly and dramatically you notice the benefits. From feeling more relaxed and focused to sleeping better and thinking more clearly, you'll experience the incredible advantages of optimized brain fitness.

Embrace this opportunity to explore the potential within your own mind. Remember, the journey to peak brain fitness and a stress-free life begins with a single step. Take that step today with the BrainTap app, and you'll soon see what a difference 14 days can make. Here's to the beginning of your journey to a happier, healthier, and more vibrant life. Enjoy your BrainTap experience!

The BrainTap app offers numerous sessions designed to optimize brain health, promote relaxation, and manage stress. While your choice of sessions would depend on personal preferences and individual needs, the following suggestions complement the 3 steps to a stress-free life:

The BrainTap app offers numerous sessions designed to optimize brain health, promote relaxation, and manage stress. While your choice of sessions would depend on personal preferences and individual needs, the following suggestions complement the 3 steps to a stress-free life:

### ○ Morning Exercise and Brain Fitness Activity

You might want to start with a BrainTap session that focuses on motivation, energy, and focus to start your day. Consider sessions like “Wake-up Session,” “Morning Jump-Start,” or any other session that suits your specific needs for the day ahead.

### ○ Mid-Day Box Breathing Technique and Walk

After lunch, choose a session that fosters relaxation and digestion. The “Relaxation and Stress Relief” or “Better Life Me Time” series could be good choices. These sessions will help you calm your mind, reduce stress levels, and refocus for the afternoon.

### ○ Evening Breathwork – The 4-8 Breath Technique

Before going to bed, select a BrainTap session that aids in sleep and relaxation. This could include sessions from the “Sleep RX” series or “Sleepytime Theta”, which are designed to induce a deep, restful sleep.

Remember, the best BrainTap sessions for you are the ones that you resonate with the most and that align with your goals. Feel free to explore and experiment until you find the perfect combination for your journey to a stress-free life.