

# Stress Less Express



## A Fun and Engaging 4-week Holiday Challenge Open to All Employees December 9, 2019 – January 5, 2020

Does the holiday season leave you feeling overwhelmed? During this self-directed program, you will learn stress-reduction and time management tactics, practice self-care, and learn to be intentional with your time throughout the holidays.

Each week will focus on a different stress-reducing tactic. You will be provided with 7 stress-reducing activities each week that relate back to the week's focus topic. Complete 4 of the 7 provided activities each week to earn credit towards your prize. By the end of week four, you are required to have completed 16 total activities. You may choose to create your own activity once per week. If you do choose to create your own activity, please briefly explain what you chose to do on the provided activity log.

Program steps:

- Participate in the challenge from December 9, 2019 to January 5, 2020
- Complete the log/prize form attached (only MIIA/Blue Cross members are eligible for prizes)
- Return the log/prize form to Mary Harrington, mharrington@mma.org, or fax to Mary at 617-542-6513 by January 13

# 4 Weeks of Super Stress Reducing Activities

## Week 1 - Take Time for YOU and Recharge: Complete at least 4 out of 7 activities

- 1. Breathe:** Chill out and meditate for at least 5 minutes - download the free "Headspace" app available in the app store for guided meditations or choose your own way of meditating.
- 2. Take a Break:** Schedule two to three 5-10-minute breaks into your calendar...use this time to breath, listen to music, take a walk, or catch up with a co-worker...just TAKE the time!
- 3. Positive Self-Talk:** choose a positive mantra and repeat it 5 times throughout the day. (Examples below)
- 4. Recharge Your Body:** (Try to) Get 7-8 hours of sleep. Try darkening your room, sleeping in cool temps, avoiding using caffeine after 3:00 p.m., or practicing slow breathing to aid the process!
- 5. Unplug:** Turn off your mobile devices at least one hour before bedtime. Allow your mind to rest! Blue light from cell phones, TVs, tablets, etc. can have a negative effect on sleep. (Do you need to be on your device? Try getting a pair of blue light blocking glasses to wear starting 1 hour before bed to mitigate effects...sold on Amazon!)
- 6. Slow Down:** set your watch 5-10 minutes ahead to avoid rushing and stressing about time-related tasks and appointments
- 7. Create Your Own**

## Week 2 - Physical Activity and Nutrition: Complete at least 4 out of 7 activities

- 1. Be Strong:** Complete the bodyweight strength circuit below (approx. 20 minutes)
- 2. Stretch:** Complete the "stretch at your desk" sequence below\*. these stretches can be done anywhere! (also try out the FREE online yoga classes at Ompractice.com/MIIA)
- 3. Walk it Off:** Go for at least a 10-15-minute walk...even if it's indoors!
- 4. Plan and Prep Your Snacks for One Day...or More if You Can:** This helps decrease the time spent cooking and gives you more time for your tasks or downtime.
- 5. Fuel:** Incorporate a few of these foods known to be stress-fighting into your meals today (tell us what you tried on your log!): leafy greens, turkey breast, oatmeal, salmon, blueberries, pistachios, avocado, cashews, milk, and many more!
- 6. Treat yourself:** Yes eat a small square of dark chocolate! (aim for dark chocolate that is at least 70% cacao-based in order to get the health benefits)
- 7. Create your own**

## Week 3 - Relaxation & incorporating FUN: Complete at least 4 out of 7 activities

- 1. Complete the Word Search Puzzle Below** (google also has endless variations and difficulty levels to choose from): Word puzzles also help to improve brain function!
- 2. Listen to Music:** Choose a song or two that you love and jam out!...dance it out too for a bonus calorie burn!
- 3. Try Aromatherapy:** Light a scented candle, diffuse essential oils, or buy some flowers to freshen up your space. Scents can be associated with memories and calm.
- 4. Massage:** Practice 5-10 minutes of self-facial massage (example below).
- 5. Color Your World:** Try an adult coloring book - research shows this reduces anxiety/stress.
- 6. Practice gratitude:** Reflect on what you are proud of, thankful for, and appreciate in your life. Write it down and put it on your fridge as a reminder to look at throughout the day.
- 7. Create your own.**

## Week 4 - Time Management: Complete at least 4 out of 7 activities

- 1. Work Smart:** Make a to-do list and prioritize the items from most to least important. This will help you make the most of your valuable time.
- 2. Set a Goal for the Week...Big or Small:** You are 42% more likely to reach a goal if you write it down and place it in a visible spot.
- 3. Identify an accountability partner:** use this person to help you stay on track with goals (stress-related or not!)
- 4. Keep a Journal:** Jot down what caused stress today...what time did they occur, how did you feel, how did you respond, etc. - do you see any common themes? Organizing your stressors, and your reactions may help you better identify and remove stressful situations from your day.
- 5. Say No:** The simplest, but many times the most difficult time management tool. It won't hurt other people's feelings as much as you think and is simply a method to be more assertive in your own life, to better help you meet your own needs.
- 6. Set a Limit:** Set a time limit for each task on your list. Higher priority tasks get more time and vice-versa. Set an alarm if you need to!
- 7. Create your own.**

# Stress Less Express – Resources/Examples

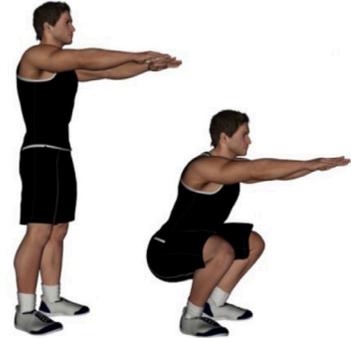
## Positive Self-Talk Examples

## Self-Facial Massage

### Bodyweight strength circuit:

Complete 8-12 repetitions of each exercise below. Repeat the circuit 2-3 times. Repeat 1-3 times per week for consistent results.

### 1. Squat



### 2. Push-up (Can be modified by placing knees on the floor, or elevating your body on a surface (shown in images))



### 3. Lunge



### 4. Tricep Dips



### 5. Glute Bridge



## Stretch at Your Desk

Complete this stretch series (or pick a few stretches) to perform 1-3 times per day. This helps keep your posture strong, your muscles limber and your mood high!

# STRETCHES YOU CAN DO AT YOUR DESK



Stand!



Neck Rolls



Neck Massage



Standing Side Bend



Wrist Stretch



Seated Spinal Twist



Cat Pose → Cow Pose



Standing Pigeon



Seated Figure 4



Standing / Seated Forward Fold



IT Band Stretch



ABC's Ankle Stretch

# Stress Less Express – Word Search

## Healthy Living

T N C H Z B F A U O G N B A L A N C E D U F F H  
X N D A A H W F K H A I F E N M E O N Y R U C B  
H E I M L O T P Z C R E A M T Y A H P I T N E G  
O R N F K O K E Q I O T T A V P O J E Y J R R N  
W C L E H G R X R W N O Z X J R Z N U A W Z U I  
P A H Q R T N I F U I R G E R G D Y Y Q H D S L  
X R F T V G G I E E T P N Z G S I N J I X S I C  
Z B X U T N Y N N S Y S R E H X Q Y B L E E E Y  
W O Z L Y Z C I E I O H O I G K V A A L Z S L C  
I H I Y M T U U P R A H P P U Y V R B U X O Q V  
Q Y T P O K N X Y X T R J U F U X A C E D C B E  
E D P L I L R R O D O S T Q V D T O S D A U Y M  
T R H T J V E L G I S U G A R E E A S Y I L Y I  
I A H C P T L A A A J N V T G S E K Z I R G L P  
T T X L B Q A P Q B F W M E I S O I V Z Y I H B  
E E N I R F X L R E L S V C I S S L U Q F F L K  
P S H Y A N A P H T L I R D X P V W A E L E O A  
P D T O G K T D S E D E A Z B F T F S L V L H V  
A M L Z N R I X E S X I J F I A U T I P N K O O  
P A A Y I J O P P E V L E T M N Y T U B J Q C R  
B P E T G Q N V B I G V N T C L I D Z Y R V L L  
K Y H J G L M P P E S E N S E L C S U M T E A C  
O B Z E O O M H P F S S S E N I P P A H W E W G  
R H I G J B I E T S Y B A L L L Y U U E E B K J

yoga	vegetables	training	sugar
strength	sleep	relaxation	protein
posture	oxygen	muscles	lifestyle
leisure	jogging	health	happiness
glucose	friendship	fitness	fibre
fat	exercise	energy	disease
diet	diabetes	dairy	cycling
carbohydrates	calories	balanced	appetite
alcohol			



[Click](#) to find word puzzles. Then click “print and save” on the first puzzle to access the answer key.

# Stress Less Express Log and Prize Form

Complete and return log form to Mary Harrington at mharrington@mma.org or fax to 617-542-6513 by January 13, 2020.

Complete 4 of the 7 provided activities each week to earn credit towards your prize. By the end of week 4, you must complete 16 total activities. You may choose to create your own activity once per week. If you do choose to create your own activity, please briefly explain it on the activity log.

Week 1: Take Time for YOU and Recharge		Week 2: Physical Activity and Nutrition		Week 3: Relaxation and fun!		Week 4: Time Management	
Sample #2		Sample	own: used my foam roller to reduce tightness/pain in my back	Sample #1		Sample #4	
Dec. 9		Dec. 16		Dec. 23		Dec. 30	
Dec. 10		Dec. 17		Dec. 24		Dec. 31	
Dec. 11		Dec. 18		Dec. 25		Jan. 1	
Dec. 12		Dec. 19		Dec. 26		Jan. 2	
Dec. 13		Dec. 20		Dec. 27		Jan. 3	
Dec. 14		Dec. 21		Dec. 28		Jan. 4	
Dec. 15		Dec. 22		Dec. 29		Jan. 5	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ MIIA/BCBS subscriber #: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Prize choice.** Choose 1st and 2nd choices. If you don't specify, we will choose your prize. [Click](#) to view below prizes. Can also view at emiia.org. Click on Well Aware, then click on Incentives. Only MIIA/Blue Cross subscribers eligible for prizes.

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collapsible cooler  | <input type="checkbox"/> Bike repair kit       | <input type="checkbox"/> Reflective arm band          | <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga mat  | <input type="checkbox"/> Car seat organizer    | <input type="checkbox"/> Rivage Weekender tote        | <input type="checkbox"/> Salad and pasta pals     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sinus soother   | <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise waist belt   | <input type="checkbox"/> Salad to go container        | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports towel in mesh bag |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Napsack with light seat cushion   | <input type="checkbox"/> Freezable lunch tote  | <input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder wrap                | <input type="checkbox"/> Bamboo cutting board     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neoprene laptop/tablet case   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mini sling cooler     | <input type="checkbox"/> Slope Messenger Bag          | <input type="checkbox"/> Collapsible strainer     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vented umbrella<br>( <input type="checkbox"/> green or <input type="checkbox"/> blue/white) | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature Sound Spa      | <input type="checkbox"/> Eye pillow                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Shaker bottle            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balance Active tote   | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor headlamp      | <input type="checkbox"/> Stainless steel water bottle |   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet Lovers travel kit |   |   |