



Stress Less Express

A 3-Week Self-Directed Wellness Challenge
December 13 – January 2, 2022

The holiday season will look a bit different this year and may feel more overwhelming than usual. We are living in a time where now, more than ever, the importance of stress awareness, and how we control stressors in our life are extremely important. 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 3, you are required to have completed 12 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 13 to January 2, 2022
- Complete the log/prize form attached (only MIIA/Blue Cross members are eligible for prizes)
- Return the log/prize form to Mary Harrington by January 10, 2022

3 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 a meditation app to use their free trial like Calm, Headspace, etc. 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:** With work and school from home in a virtual format, screen time is on the rise! It can be easy to lose track of how much time is spent on devices. Blue light from computers, cell phones, TVs, tablets, etc. can have a negative effect on sleep. Turn off your mobile devices at least one hour before bedtime. Allow your mind to rest! (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**
([Click here](#) to access a library of of fitness and exercise videos to help you complete the above tasks.)

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

- 1. Complete a Word Search Puzzle** (google 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.**

Stress Less Express – Resources/Examples



Positive Self-Talk Examples

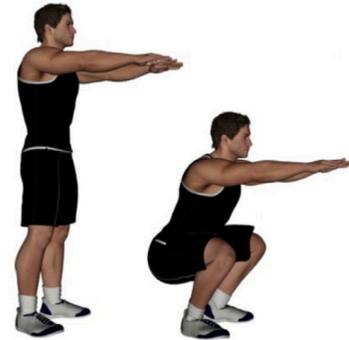
Fitness/Exercise Videos

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



Stress Less Express



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!

Stress Less Express Log



Please complete the following log form and mail or email to Mary Harrington at MIIA, 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108 or mharrington@mma.org by January 10, 2022. Complete 4 of the 7 provided activities each week to earn credit towards your prize. By the end of week 3, you must complete 12 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. All log forms must be unique when a spouse or dependent is also participating.

Name _____ Employer _____

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

Stress Less Express Prize Form



Please complete the following prize form. Return it with your log form to Mary Harrington at mharrington@mma.org OR mail to Mary at MIIA, 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108 by January 10, 2022.

Name _____ Employer _____

MIIA/BCBS subscriber: Yes No

Email _____ Phone _____

Mailing address _____

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/BCBS members eligible for prizes.

___ Balance Active tote

___ Shoulder wrap

___ BBQ utensil set

___ Body wrap

___ Wind chimes

___ Collapsible cooler

___ Yoga block

___ Waterproof Bluetooth outdoor wireless speaker

___ First aid kit

___ Nature Sound Spa

___ VODAPOD 32-ounce Water Bottle with Time Marker

___ Zuma cooler backpack

___ Yoga strap

___ Insulated cotton cooler lunch tote

___ Sports towel in a mesh bag

___ Pet Lovers travel kit

___ Shake it work out bottle

___ *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man* by Emmanuel Acho

___ Outdoor headlamp

___ Waterproof picnic blanket

___ Slope Messenger Bag