Welcome to Super yoUniversity! For six weeks we will be exploring ways to empower our bodies and minds with super skills that will enable us to fight the “villains” that undermine our health. Each week you will receive a packet of information that focuses on a different “villain.” The first page of your packet has seven tickets with activities based on the information in the rest of the packet. Complete as many of these activities as you like. Then fill out the tickets, cut them apart and submit them in the box located at our Information Desk. Alternatively, you can fill out an online version of the tickets by visiting our web page: www.jesspublib.org. A PDF version of the packet is available on our web page as well. For every ticket you submit, you will receive an entry into our drawing to win a $250 gift card to Hibbett Sports in Nicholasville. Good luck in becoming a more super you!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Ticket Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read the entire Fight Against Stress packet.</td>
<td>Name: ____________________________ Phone Number: ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do 5 minutes of meditation every day for a week.</td>
<td>Name: ____________________________ Phone Number: ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Try at least 10 minutes of easy yoga 3 days out of the week.</td>
<td>Name: ____________________________ Phone Number: ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Try all the recipes in the Stress-Busting One Day Menu.</td>
<td>Name: ____________________________ Phone Number: ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take a hot bath with your favorite essential oils.</td>
<td>Name: ____________________________ Phone Number: ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go for a nature hike with a family member or friend or pet.</td>
<td>Name: ____________________________ Phone Number: ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance to your favorite music at least once during the week.</td>
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Meet the Villain: Stress

Stress is a very difficult term to define because its causes and effects vary from person to person. It isn’t always a “villain” either! The term “stress”, as it is currently used was coined by Hans Selye in 1936, who defined it as “the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change”. Selye proved through experimentation that laboratory animals exposed to acute, negative stimuli such as loud noises, harsh changes in temperature, or bright light, all exhibited similar physical changes. He also showed that long term exposure to such conditions could cause the animals to develop diseases. Selye noted that short term stressors could produce positive results as well, such as motivation to achieve a goal.

As Selye’s theories became more mainstream, his original definition changed, in part due to the input of other physicians and researchers, but mostly due to Selye’s ongoing struggle to more accurately describe his findings. He redefined stress as “The rate of wear and tear on the body.” This is actually a pretty good description of biological aging so it is not surprising that increased stress can accelerate many aspects of the aging process. Another definition of stress is “a demand that exceeds an individual’s coping ability, disrupting his or her psychological equilibrium.”

Fight or Flight Response

The easiest way to define stress is in terms of its physical and physiological effects on a person. These effects are commonly called the “fight or flight” response. Your nervous system is hard wired to perceive any stress as a possible threat to your safety, no matter whether the stress is real or imagined. Your body responds to threats by releasing a flood of stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol to rouse the body for emergency action.
Flight or Fight Response (continued)

Your heart pounds faster, muscles tighten, blood pressure rises, breath quickens, and your senses become sharper. These physical changes increase your strength and stamina, speed your reaction time, and enhance your focus—preparing you to either fight or flee from the danger at hand. Life-threatening events are not the only ones to trigger this reaction. We experience it almost any time we come across something unexpected or something that frustrates our goals. When the threat is small, our response is small and we often do not notice it among the many other distractions of a stressful situation.

1. **Nervous system.** The heart may beat faster, and blood pressure rises to ready the body to fight the perceived threat.

2. **Musculoskeletal system.** Muscles tense and can trigger tension headaches.

3. **Respiratory system.** Breathing quickens.

4. **Cardiovascular system.** Heart rate increases.

5. **Endocrine system.** Signals sent from glands to the body cause a release of cortisol into the body to fight the perceived threat.

6. **Gastrointestinal system.** Eating habits may change, and the feeling of “butterflies” in your stomach may occur.

The stress response is the body’s way of protecting you. When working properly, it helps you stay focused, energetic, and alert. In emergency situations, stress can save your life—giving you extra strength to defend yourself, for example, or spurring you to slam on the brakes to avoid an accident. The stress response also helps you rise to meet challenges. Stress is what keeps you on your toes during a presentation at work, sharpens your concentration when you’re attempting the game-winning free throw, or drives you to study for an exam when you’d rather be watching TV. But beyond a certain point, stress ceases to be helpful and starts causing damage to your health and quality of life.
Eustress = Good Stress: Acute / Short-Term

Acute or short-term stress results when the biological stress response is activated for minutes to hours. Acute or short-term stress can have protective and beneficial effects. The beneficial effects of short-term stress make sense because the fight-or-flight stress response is nature’s fundamental survival mechanism.

- Boosts natural immune system
- Helps us adapt to change
- Encourages creative thinking
- Helps achieve goals / make deadlines
- Enables us to handle emergency situations
- Enables us to protect ourselves
- Can translate to better mental & physical performance in daily tasks

Distress = Bad Stress: Chronic / Long Term

Chronic or long-term stress results when the biological stress response is activated for months to years. It can be due to one long-term stressor, like caring for someone who is chronically ill, or from numerous short-term stressors with insufficient time for a return to a resting state.

- Impairment of brain structure and function
- Increased biological aging
- Suppression or abnormal regulation of immune function
- Increased susceptibility to infection and disease
- Difficulty in performing regular tasks and coping with challenges
- Moodiness, irritability, depression

Stress Curve

Our bodies were designed to ride this stress curve over short spans of time. If we incur continuous, multiple stressors without physical release, holding our systems in the “danger zone” between fatigue and panic, the fight or flight response begins to cause problems such as high blood pressure, high blood sugar, acid reflux, and a weakened immune system.
## Warning Signs & Symptoms of Chronic Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Symptoms</th>
<th>Emotional Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory problems</td>
<td>Moodiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to concentrate</td>
<td>Irritability or short temper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor judgement</td>
<td>Agitation, inability to relax</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeing only the negative</td>
<td>Feeling overwhelmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious or racing thoughts</td>
<td>Sense of loneliness or isolation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant worrying</td>
<td>Depression or general unhappiness</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Symptoms</th>
<th>Behavioral Symptoms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aches &amp; pains</td>
<td>Eating more or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhea or constipation</td>
<td>Sleeping too much or too little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausea, dizziness</td>
<td>Isolating yourself from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest pain, rapid heartbeat</td>
<td>Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of sex drive</td>
<td>Using alcohol, cigarettes or drugs to relax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent colds</td>
<td>Nervous habits (e.g., nail biting, pacing)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Just because you don’t have obvious physical symptoms of stress doesn’t mean you aren’t experiencing it. Strokes, cancer, high cholesterol and diabetes are all silent killers associated with stress. **Studies estimate that as much as 80% of all known ailments are caused directly or indirectly by chronic stress!**

### Stress Related Illnesses

- Heart Disease / Strokes
- Asthma
- Obesity
- Headaches / Migraines
- Depression / Anxiety Disorders
- Alzheimer’s Disease
- Acne, Eczema, Psoriasis
- Cancer
- Gastrointestinal Problems (chronic heartburn, GERD, IBS)
- Colds & Viruses
- Infections
- Insomnia
- Fibromyalgia
- Chronic Aches and Pains
- Auto-Immune Diseases
Breaking the Stress Cycle

Stress follows a cycle of events which circle around and around, each step increasing the severity of the next step. To break the stress patterns, you can interrupt the cycle at any point, but the cycle is most effectively broken by changing the stressor or our reaction to the stressor.

Stress management begins with identifying the sources of the stress in your life. Your true sources of stress aren’t always obvious, and it’s all too easy to overlook your own stress-inducing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Sure, you may know that you’re constantly worried about work deadlines. But maybe it’s your procrastination, rather than the actual job demands, that leads to deadline stress. To identify your true sources of stress, look closely at your habits, attitude, and excuses.

Try keeping a stress journal. Record the events that triggered stressed responses. Interrupt your own reactions and ask yourself why you are responding in that particular way. Look closely at your habits, attitudes, and excuses – Is it the event? Is it you? Write anything you did that made you feel better. Once you are aware of the causes of your stress, you can try any of the following tactics.

### Avoid the Stressor
- Learn how to say “no.”
- Avoid people who stress you out.
- Take control of your environment.
- Avoid hot-button topics.
- Pare down your to-do list.

### Alter the Stressor
- Express your feelings instead of bottling them up.
- Be willing to compromise.
- Be more assertive.
- Manage your time better.

### Adapt to the Stressor
- Look at the problem differently.
- Change perspective.
- Adjust your standards.
- Focus on the positive.

### Accept the Stressor
- Don’t try to control the uncontrollable.
- Look for the silver lining.
- Talk about it.
- Learn to forgive.
Virtually any form of exercise, from aerobics to yoga, can act as a stress reliever. If you’re not an athlete or even if you’re downright out of shape, you can still make a little exercise go a long way toward stress management.

Exercise:

• pumps endorphins
• is meditation in motion
• reverses brain atrophy caused by stress
• improves endurance
• improves immune system

Prevention: 14 Walking Workouts To Burn Fat And Boost Energy

Huffington Post: Healthy Living
How Does Exercise Reduce Stress?
by Meredith Melnick
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/21/exercise-reduces-stress-levels-anxiety-cortisol_n_3307325.html

How, exactly, does exercise make you less stressed out? Especially when exercise raises levels of the stress hormone, cortisol? We’ve all read that exercise lowers levels of anxiety, depression and stress. And that holds true even for people who are stressed out by the idea of exercise. But how exactly does it do that?

Exercise attacks stress in two ways, according to Matthew Stults-Kolehmainen, Ph.D., a kinesiologist at the Yale Stress Center. He told HuffPost Healthy Living that raising one’s heart rate can actually reverse damage to the brain caused by stressful events: "Stress atrophies the brain -- especially the hippocampus, which is responsible for a lot, but memory in particular. When you’re stressed, you forget things."

Exercise, by contrast, promotes production of neurohormones like norepinephrine that are associated with improved cognitive function, elevated mood and learning. And that can improve thinking dulled by stressful events -- some research even shows how exercise can make you smarter.

In fact, many researchers posit that improved communication could be the basis of both greater reserves of the neurochemicals that help the brain communicate with the body and the body's improved ability to respond to stress. The American Psychological Association reported:

Exercise forces the body’s physiological systems -- all of which are involved in the stress response -- to communicate much more closely than usual: The cardiovascular system communicates with the renal system, which communicates with the muscular system. And all of these are controlled by the central and sympathetic nervous systems, which also must communicate with each other. This workout of the body’s communication system may be the true value of exercise; the more sedentary we get, the less efficient our bodies in responding to stress.

But going for a rigorous jog or bike ride (or even for a walk or out dancing) can actually cause immediate stress reduction. On a common psychiatric metric, called PALMS, those who are tested immediately after working out rate higher for mood, memory and energy -- and lower for depression, tension and anxiety.

That's particularly surprising because, as our question-asker points out, rigorous exercise temporarily raises our level of circulating cortisol -- the hormone that rises when we experience stress. The key word in this instance is temporary: For most people, cortisol rates return to normal following even intense exercise.
Yoga is a combination of breathing and postures with the purpose of realigning your mind and body. The benefits of yoga include decreased stress and tension, increased strength and balance, increased flexibility, lowered blood pressure and reduced cortisol levels. Yoga’s emphasis on breathing and the mind/body/spirit connection also yields strong emotional benefits. People who practice yoga frequently report that they sleep better and feel less stressed. “It helps you learn not to concentrate on things you can’t control, to live in the present,” says Mindy Arbuckle, yoga teacher and owner of Green Mountain Yoga in Arvada, Colo. “It seeps into the rest your life. You’ll notice you’re handling a stressful event more easily, whether it’s family or work.”

- You do not have to be flexible to do yoga.
- There are easy classes for beginners, seniors and people with any kind of physical problem.
- Hatha yoga is most flowing and gentle.
- Many poses can be done right where you are or at night before you fall asleep.
- Concentrate on your breath.
- Everyone’s pose will look different – don’t worry about whether you are doing it “right.”

Huffington Post: 10 Yoga Poses for Stress
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/06/10-yoga-poses-for-stress-_n_3000801.html

American Yoga Association
http://www.americanyogaassociation.org/contents.html

CNN: 10 Yoga Pose to Beat Stress

- Standing Forward Bend
- Triangle Pose
Divine Caroline: 10 Easy Yoga Exercises for Relieving Stress

For detailed descriptions of each move, visit
Sukshma Yoga takes no time or preparation. These little exercises open up subtle energy channels and in a session as short as 7 minutes, you can feel a highly palpable difference. Here are the instructions to do Sukshma Yoga exercises for face and head.

- Pinch your eyebrows 5-6 times using your thumb and the index figure.
- Roll your eyes 5-6 times clockwise and then anticlockwise.
- Squeeze your eyes tight and then open them wide. Repeat this for 10-15 times.
- Pull your ears for 10-15 seconds.
- Hold your ears and move them clockwise and anti-clockwise (as if riding a cycle) till your ears become hot.
- Move three fingers (first, middle, and ring finger) from the jaw line to chin and massage your cheeks. You could keep your mouth open as you do this.
- Open and close your jaw 8-10 times.
- Open your mouth and move your jaw side-to-side 8-10 times.
- Rotate your neck. Breathing in take your head back and breathing out touch your chin to chest. Rotate your head in clockwise direction. Breathe in as you go up (first half of the circle) and breathe out as you return to the starting position (second half of the circle). Repeat this 5-6 times in clockwise and counter clockwise.
- Shake your hands for 2 minutes.

Yoga Wiz: Your Quick Yoga Solution

Yoga for Beginners: Sukshma Vyayam - Step by Step Information Regarding Joint Movements

Art of Living: Sukshma Yoga
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyFEOPp1BUY
Meditation is anything we do to quiet our brains automatic reactions and bring about a calm, present-focused awareness. The benefits of meditation are manifold because it can reverse your stress response, thereby shielding you from the effects of chronic stress. When practicing meditation, your heart rate and breathing slow down, your blood pressure normalizes, you use oxygen more efficiently, and you sweat less. Your adrenal glands produce less cortisol, your mind ages at a slower rate, and your immune function improves. Your mind also clears and your creativity increases. People who meditate regularly find it easier to give up life-damaging habits like smoking, drinking and drugs. Meditation research is still new, but promising. There are many ways to meditate, but the table below lists the four most common methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>What is it?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breath Focus</td>
<td>Focusing on slow, deep breathing and gently disengaging the mind from distracting thoughts and sensations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Scan</td>
<td>Focusing on one part of the body or group of muscles at a time and mentally releasing any physical tension you feel there</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guided Imagery</td>
<td>Using pleasing mental images to help you relax and focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness</td>
<td>Breathing deeply while staying in the moment by deliberately focusing on thoughts and sensations that arise during the meditation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HelpGuide.org: Relaxation Techniques for Stress Relief  
http://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/relaxation-techniques-for-stress-relief.htm

About Health: The Benefits of Meditation for Stress Management  
http://stress.about.com/od/tensiontamers/p/profilemeditati.htm

Mayo Clinic: Meditation: A Simple Fast Way to Reduce Stress  
http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/meditation/in-depth/meditation/art-20045858

Harvard Health Publications: Mindfulness Mediation May Ease Anxiety, Mental Stress  
http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/mindfulness-meditation-may-ease-anxiety-mental-stress-201401086967

Web MD: Meditation, Stress and Your Health  
http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/meditation-natural-remedy-for-insomnia
Breathing deeply in and out for just one minute can help to refresh your mind and reset your body. Harvard University research in the 1970s conducted by Dr. Herbert Benson found that short periods of meditation that focused on the breath had the power to alter the body's stress responses, activating the "relaxation response." Controlled breathing can cause physiological changes that include:

- lowered blood pressure and heart rate
- reduced levels of stress hormones in the blood
- reduced lactic acid build-up in muscle tissue
- balanced levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the blood
- improved immune system functioning
- increased physical energy
- increased feelings of calm and wellbeing.

Sit comfortably and raise your ribcage to expand your chest. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen. Take notice of how your upper chest and abdomen are moving while you breathe. Concentrate on your breath and try to gently breathe in and out through the nose. Your upper chest and stomach should be still, allowing the diaphragm to work more efficiently with your abdomen rather than your chest.

**Time Healthland: 6 Breathing Exercises to Relax in 10 Minutes or Less**
http://healthland.time.com/2012/10/08/6-breathing-exercises-to-relax-in-10-minutes-or-less/

**Better Health Channel: Breathing to Reduce Stress**

**Alberta Health: Belly Breathing (Diaphragmatic Breathing)**
https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?hwId=aa141579

1. Stand, sit or lie down comfortably in a quiet place.

2. Close your eyes and loosen any tense muscles. Make sure to relax your shoulders.

3. Place one hand on your upper chest and another on your belly button.

4. Breathe in slowly through your nose for three seconds. Feel your stomach expand. Your chest should remain still.

5. Breathe out slowly through your mouth for three seconds. Feel your stomach move back.

6. Repeat steps 4 and 5. Gradually increase the time you take to breathe in and out.

Four seconds in and four seconds out, five seconds in and five seconds out......
**Nutrition Allies for Stress Relief**

**B vitamins:** These help the body cope with stress (build your metabolism) and control the whole nervous system. Required for proper neurological function, DNA synthesis, and the production of red blood cells, which prevent anemia.

**Proteins:** Assist in growth and tissue repair. Contain serotonin boosters that help relieve depression.

**A & E vitamins:** Essential for normal vision. Bolsters immune system.

**C vitamins:** Protection of the immune system (antioxidants, diabetes protection etc.). Lowers the amount of cortisol in your body.

**Magnesium: & Zinc** Needed for a variety of tasks such as muscle relaxation, fatty acid formation, making new cells and heartbeat regulation. Too little magnesium may trigger headaches and fatigue, compounding the effects of stress.

**Complex Carbs:** Prompt the brain to make more serotonin. Complex carbs can also help you feel balanced by stabilizing blood sugar levels.

**Omega 3 Fatty Acids:** Prevents surges in stress hormones and adrenaline levels. Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish such as salmon and tuna, can prevent surges in stress hormones and may help protect against heart disease, depression, and premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

**Potassium:** Helps lower blood pressure.

**Vitamin D & Calcium:** Relieve tense muscles, help fight fatigue and depression. Research shows that calcium eases anxiety and mood swings linked to PMS.

**Iron:** Essential for the formation of hemoglobin, which carries oxygen to the blood, and myoglobin, which stores oxygen in muscles – both necessary to prevent fatigue.

**Fiber:** Helps maintain healthy heart and elimination system.

Some great foods to try when you are stressed include *asparagus, avocados, berries, cashews, chamomile or green tea, dark chocolate, garlic, oatmeal, oysters, walnuts, Swiss chard, salmon, tuna, carrots, milk, yogurt, unsweetened whole grain or rice cereals, and whole grain breads or pretzels.*

**Stress Management Society: Nutritional Stress & Health**

**WebMD: Foods that Help Tame Stress**

**Prevention: 13 Foods that Fight Stress**

**Better Homes & Gardens: 10 Super Foods for Stress relief**
There are a number of unhealthy ways to cope with pressure and anxiety, but "stress eating" candy and chips -- or turning to alcohol and energy drinks -- might just take the proverbial cake. Paradoxically, when dealing with stress, the body frequently craves precisely the foods that will exacerbate the condition most.

"When they're stressed, people go naturally to the wrong foods because they increase levels of [the stress hormone] cortisol," Heather Bauer, R.D., founder of Bestowed.com told the Huffington Post. "People tend to crave foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt because those directly increase our cortisol levels."

Top Foods to Avoid

- Energy Drinks
- Candy & Gum
- Pastries
- Alcohol
- Chips / Bagged Snack Foods
- Coffee
- Fried Foods

When you're stressed out, junk food starts to look even more tempting than usual. A recent study found that going for a quick walk as soon as those cravings hit can help you keep things under control, even if the treats are right in front of you.

The study, led by Larissa Ledochowski of the University of Innsbruck in Austria and Adrian H. Taylor of Plymouth University in the UK, and published in the journal PLOS ONE, suggests that a little basic exercise can drastically reduce the chances you'll reach for a candy bar. The study's participants—all identified as overweight individuals—engaged in stressful activity after a three-day abstinence from sugary snacks. Half of them was asked to go for a brisk, 15-minute walk before engaging in the stressful activities. The other half did no such activity, and then both groups were asked to handle some unwrapped, sugary snacks and try to resist them.

Ledochowski and Taylor's results suggested that individuals who engaged in the walk beforehand were far less likely to indulge in the junk food. If you're feeling stressed and the allure of sweet treats is getting too strong, a walk might help you out. You're taking your mind off of the snacks, alleviating and preventing stress with a little exercise, and a walk is always good for you anyway.
**Breakfast**

**Start-the-Day Smoothie**

**Ingredients**

- 1 cup coconut or almond milk
- 1/2 cup fresh juice
- 1 banana
- 1/2 cup frozen blueberries
- 1/2 avocado
- 1 tablespoon raw cacao powder
- 1 tablespoon of flaxseed
- 2 handfuls of baby spinach

**Directions**

Place all ingredients in a high-speed blender and blend until smooth.

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**Snack**

**Super-Healthy Bran & Fruit Muffins**

**Ingredients**

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup ground flax seed
- 3/4 cup oat bran
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 3/4 cup milk
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 2 cups shredded carrots
- 2 apples, peeled, shredded
- Blackberries or blueberries
- 1 cup chopped mixed nuts

**Directions**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease muffin pan or line with paper muffin liners.

In a large bowl, mix together flour, flax seed, oat bran, brown sugar, baking soda, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. Add the milk, eggs, vanilla and oil; mix until just blended. Stir in the carrots, apples, raisins and nuts.

Fill prepared muffin cups 2/3 full with batter.

Bake at 350 F (175 degrees C) for 15 to 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean.
**Lunch**

**Pan-Seared Tuna with Avocado, Soy, Ginger, and Lime**

**Ingredients**
- 2 big handfuls fresh cilantro leaves, chopped
- 1/2 jalapeno, sliced
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 garlic clove, grated
- 2 limes, juiced
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- Pinch sugar
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 (6-ounce) block sushi-quality tuna
- 1 ripe avocado, halved, peeled, pitted, sliced

**Directions**

In a mixing bowl, combine the cilantro, jalapeno, ginger, garlic, lime juice, soy sauce, sugar, salt, pepper, and 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Stir the ingredients together until well incorporated.

Place a skillet over medium-high heat and coat with the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Season the tuna generously with salt and pepper. Lay the tuna in the hot oil and sear for 1 minute on each side to form a slight crust.

Pour 1/2 of the cilantro mixture into the pan to coat the fish.

Serve the seared tuna with the sliced avocado and the remaining cilantro sauce drizzled over the whole plate.

Recipe courtesy of Tyler Florence

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**Dinner**

**Spinach Lasagna**

**Ingredients**
- 12 whole wheat lasagna noodles
- 8 ounces button mushrooms, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cans (14.5 ounces each) diced tomatoes
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) tomato sauce
- 1 bag fresh spinach leaves
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- Salt & Pepper to taste
- 1 container (16 oz) ricotta cheese
- 1 container (16 oz) parmesan cheese
- 5 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

**Directions**

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Coat a 13”x 9” baking dish with cooking spray.

Prepare the noodles according to the package directions. Drain.

Cook the onion, and garlic in the oil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat for 7 to 10 minutes or until soft. Add the tomatoes, tomato sauce, and Italian seasoning. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low; simmer for 15 minutes.

In a separate pan, stir fry mushrooms in a bit of olive oil for a few minutes. Add the spinach leaves, stir fry for about 30 seconds and then remove from heat.

Place half of the noodles in the prepared baking dish. Spread with half of the ricotta cheese. Sprinkle with 2 cups of the mozzarella and parmesan. Cover with half the mushroom and spinach mixture. Cover with half of the tomato mixture. Repeat.

Cover and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and sprinkle with the remaining cheese. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until hot in the center.
Lemon balm: Several small studies have found that this supplement, which is part of the mint family, can improve mood and induce feelings of calmness. One study found that 1,600 milligrams of dried lemon balm was associated with an increase in calmness for up to six hours, he said. Lemon balm also appears to be relatively safe.

Chamomile: If you have a jittery moment, a cup of chamomile tea might help calm you down. Some compounds in chamomile (Matricaria recutita) bind to the same brain receptors as drugs like Valium. You can also take it as a supplement, typically standardized to contain 1.2% apigenin (an active ingredient), along with dried chamomile flowers.

L-theanine (or green tea): Research shows that L-theanine helps curb a rising heart rate and blood pressure, and a few small human studies have found that it reduces anxiety. In one study, anxiety-prone subjects were calmer and more focused during a test if they took 200 milligrams of L-theanine beforehand. You can get that much L-theanine from green tea, but you’ll have to drink many cups—as few as five, as many as 20.

Valerian: Some herbal supplements reduce anxiety without making you sleepy (such as L-theanine), while others are sedatives. Valerian (Valeriana officinalis) is squarely in the second category. It is a sleep aid, for insomnia. It contains sedative compounds; the German government has approved it as a treatment for sleep problems.

Passionflower: It’s a sedative; the German government has approved it for nervous restlessness. Some studies find that it can reduce symptoms of anxiety as effectively as prescription drugs. It’s often used for insomnia. Like other sedatives, it can cause sleepiness and drowsiness, so don’t take it, or other sedative herbs, when you are taking prescription sedatives.

Licorice Root: It contains a natural hormone alternative to cortisone, which can help the body handle stressful situations, and can help to normalize blood sugar levels as well as your adrenal glands, providing you with the energy necessary to deal with the stressful situation at hand. Some claim licorice stimulates cranial and cerebrospinal fluid, thereby calming the mind.

St. John’s Wort: Though it presents itself as an unassuming, flowering perennial, St. John’s Wort was shown to be more effective than Prozac, according to a recent study, in treating major depressive disorders. St. John’s Wort is most often taken as a capsule or tablet. It is often combined with valerian root when insomnia or restlessness are accompanying symptoms.

Skullcap: Skullcap has sedative, tonic, and anti-inflammatory properties. Many people use the natural sedative properties of skullcap to fight insomnia, restlessness, rapid heartbeat, and even depression. It should be taken as directed, and should not be used by pregnant women.

Check with your doctor before taking herbal supplements to ensure they do not interact negatively with other medications!

Live Science: The Truth about Herbal Remedies for Stress

Calm Clinic: Natural & Herbal Anxiety Remedies
http://www.calmclinic.com/Anxiety/natural-herbal-remedies

Care2: 5 Herbs that Reduce Stress & Anxiety

Health: 19 Natural Remedies for Anxiety
http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20669377_8,00.html
The part of the brain that processes smells is located in close proximity to that which governs emotion and memory, so scent can be a powerful way to induce pleasant emotions and calm the mind. Essential oils can be particularly effective -- according to a 2008 study published in Holistic Nursing Practice, essential oils actually reduced stress perception in nurses working in intensive care unit settings. Try keeping ylang ylang, peppermint or lavender essential oils at your desk and applying a small amount on the skin when you start feeling stressed. Some of the most common oils used for relaxation include

- Lavender
- Frankincense
- Rose
- Vanilla
- Chamomile
- Ylang Ylang
- Geranium
- Sandalwood

**Relaxing Essential Oil Recipes**

**Relaxing Bath**
- 2 drops bergamot oil
- 1 drop petitgrain oil
Add oils directly to the bath and stir to distribute.
You can enjoy this bath daily.

**Relaxing Massage Oil**
- 10 drops lavender oil
- 6 drops chamomile oil
- 4 drops ylang ylang oil
- 4 drops sandalwood oil (expensive, so optional)
- 2 ounces vegetable oil
Combine ingredients. Use as a massage oil as needed, or add 1 or 2 teaspoons to your bath or 1 teaspoon to a footbath. To add sophistication and an extra lift to this blend, add 1 drop of neroli essential oil. For children less than 8 years of age, use half the quantity of essential oil recommended. Without the vegetable oil, this combination can be used in an aromatherapy diffuser, simmering pan of water, or a potpourri cooker, or you can add it to 2 ounces of water for an air spray. Use daily and as often as you like.

**A Calming Diffuser Blend**
- Lavender - 18 drops
- Rosewood- 15 drops
- Roman Chamomile - 12 drops
- Geranium - 12 drops
- Clary Sage - 10 drops
- Ylang Ylang - 10 drops
- Marjoram - 8 drops
Blend into a small glass container and shake well. Add to your favorite diffuser.

**Wellbeing.com: 15 Essential Oils for Stress Relief**

**Mental Health Daily: Aromatherapy: 9 Best Essential Oils For Anxiety and Stress**
**Listen to Music**

Research has shown that music has a profound effect on your body and psyche. In fact, there’s a growing field of health care known as music therapy, which uses music to heal. Those who practice music therapy are finding a benefit in using music to help cancer patients, children with ADD, and others, and even hospitals are beginning to use music and music therapy to help with pain management, to help ward off depression, to promote movement, to calm patients, to ease muscle tension, and for many other benefits that music and music therapy can bring. This is not surprising, as music affects the body and mind in many powerful ways.

**Laugh**

A good sense of humor can’t cure all ailments, but data is mounting about the positive things laughter can do. When you start to laugh, it doesn’t just lighten your load mentally, it actually induces physical changes in your body. Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain. Laughter can activate and relieve your stress response. A rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response and increases your heart rate and blood pressure. The result? A good, relaxed feeling. Laughter can also stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, both of which help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.

**Dance**

The free motion and stretching movements of dance can help to release tension from the body and lift your spirits. Exercise in any form can act as a stress reliever by pumping up endorphins, according to the Mayo Clinic, and dancing can be a particularly enjoyable way to blow off steam for many people. Put a favorite song on your headphones, step away from the computer, and let loose for a minute -- it’s almost guaranteed to boost your mood.

**Other Stress-Relieving Activities**

- Stepping away from technology
- Being in nature
- Adding plants to your space
- Seeing your best friend
- Taking a short walk
- Spending time with animals
- Hobbies
- Hugs & Kisses
- Massage
- Hot Baths
### Books Available at JCPL

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<tr>
<td><strong>Stress Free for Good: 10 Scientifically Proven Life Skills for Health and Happiness</strong></td>
<td>Fred Luskin and Kenneth R. Pelletier</td>
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<td><strong>The Stress Management Sourcebook</strong></td>
<td>J. Barton Cunningham</td>
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<td><strong>The Mindfulness Code: Keys for Overcoming Stress, Anxiety, Fear, and Unhappiness</strong></td>
<td>Donald Altman</td>
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<td>Amit Sood, M.D., M.Sc</td>
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<td><strong>Well Stressed: Manage Stress before It Turns Toxic</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Hijacked by Your Brain: How to Free Yourself When Stress Takes Over</strong></td>
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<td><strong>10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voice in My Head, Reduced Stress Without Losing My Edge, and Found a Self-Help That Actually Works</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Meditation and Relaxation in Plain English</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Stress-Free Mama: Holistic Stress Relief for Mom</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Psychology Today Stress Articles</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/stress">https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/stress</a></td>
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<td><strong>CMHC: UT Counseling and Mental Health Center Stress Management &amp; Reduction Program</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/stressrecess/explore.html">http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/stressrecess/explore.html</a></td>
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