

MAY 2024

# MENTAL HEALTH

Is it mind over matter?

## CHRONIC STRESS

When your autonomic nervous system doesn't often get an opportunity to activate its relaxation response

## MENTAL HEALTH TIPS FOR THE AGING

Living a good life in your advanced years

## MENTAL BENEFITS OF MAGNESIUM

Magnesium acts as a mood booster, muscle relaxer, stress reducer, and sleep aid

[WWW.HLTH4ALL.ORG](http://WWW.HLTH4ALL.ORG)

## HOW TO STOP CONSTANT WORRY AND ANXIETY

Strategies that you can use to cope



BY HEALTH FOR ALL

# What is Chronic Stress?



## Sources

Chronic stress is a state of prolonged and continuous stress that can arise from various sources such as ongoing financial difficulties, work pressures, family conflicts, or long-term health issues. Unlike acute stress, which is a short-term response to a specific threat or challenge, chronic stress persists over an extended period, often without a clear endpoint.

## Effects of Chronic Stress on the Body

Chronic stress can have a wide range of negative effects on both physical and mental health. Here are some of the key impacts:

### **Cardiovascular System**

**Increased Blood Pressure:** Chronic stress causes the body to release stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, which increase heart rate and constrict blood vessels, leading to elevated blood pressure.

**Risk of Heart Disease:** Prolonged stress can contribute to the development of hypertension, heart attacks, and strokes.

### **Immune System**

**Weakened Immune Response:** Persistent stress can suppress the immune system, making the body more susceptible to infections and slowing down the healing process.

**Increased Inflammation:** Chronic stress can lead to increased levels of inflammation in the body, which is linked to a variety of health conditions, including autoimmune diseases and chronic illnesses .

# The Body Keeps the Score



## Effects Continued...

### **Digestive System**

**Gastrointestinal Issues:** Stress can cause or exacerbate digestive problems such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), ulcers, and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

**Appetite Changes:** Stress can lead to changes in appetite, causing overeating or undereating, which can result in weight gain or loss and associated health problems.

### **Musculoskeletal System**

**Muscle Tension:** Chronic stress can lead to persistent muscle tension, causing headaches, neck and shoulder pain, and overall discomfort.

**Risk of Injury:** Prolonged muscle tension can increase the risk of musculoskeletal injuries.

### **Endocrine System**

**Hormonal Imbalance:** Continuous stress can disrupt the normal functioning of the endocrine system, affecting hormones that regulate various body processes, including metabolism, reproduction, and mood.

**Insulin Resistance:** Chronic stress can contribute to insulin resistance, which is a precursor to type 2 diabetes.

### **Mental Health**

**Anxiety and Depression:** Chronic stress is a significant risk factor for the development of anxiety disorders and depression.

**Cognitive Impairment:** Long-term stress can impair memory, attention, and decision-making abilities.

### **Sleep Disturbances**

**Insomnia:** Stress can interfere with the ability to fall asleep and stay asleep, leading to chronic sleep deprivation.

**Sleep Quality:** Even when sleep is achieved, it may be of poor quality, resulting in fatigue and decreased daytime functioning.

# The fight or flight response

In the moment, acute stress activates our fight-or-flight response. This response floods your body with hormones, such as cortisol (the stress hormone) and adrenaline, and puts you in a state of physiological arousal, which involves an increased heart rate and faster breathing.

## Symptoms of short-term stress:

- Shortness of breath
- Impending feelings of doom
- Excessive sweating
- Heart palpitations
- Muscle tightness
- Dry mouth
- Shaking
- Pressured speech
- Pins-and-needles sensation

## Symptoms associated with ongoing stress include:

- Insomnia
- Fatigue
- Chronic pain, especially muscle pain and neck stiffness
- Gastrointestinal problems, such as nausea, stomach pain, diarrhea, and constipation
- Irritability
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Headache
- Difficulty concentrating
- Apathy
- Depression
- Changes in appetite
- Unwanted weight loss or gain
- Low libido
- Erectile dysfunction (ED)



**IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE STRESSOR ITSELF NO LONGER HAS TO BE PRESENT FOR YOU TO EXPERIENCE ONGOING STRESS. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU MAY CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE SYMPTOMS OF BURNOUT LONG AFTER LEAVING A HIGH-PRESSURE JOB.**

# Treatment Options



Professional treatment for chronic stress typically involves psychotherapy. Examples of psychotherapy that may help with long-term stress include:

## Mindfulness Therapy

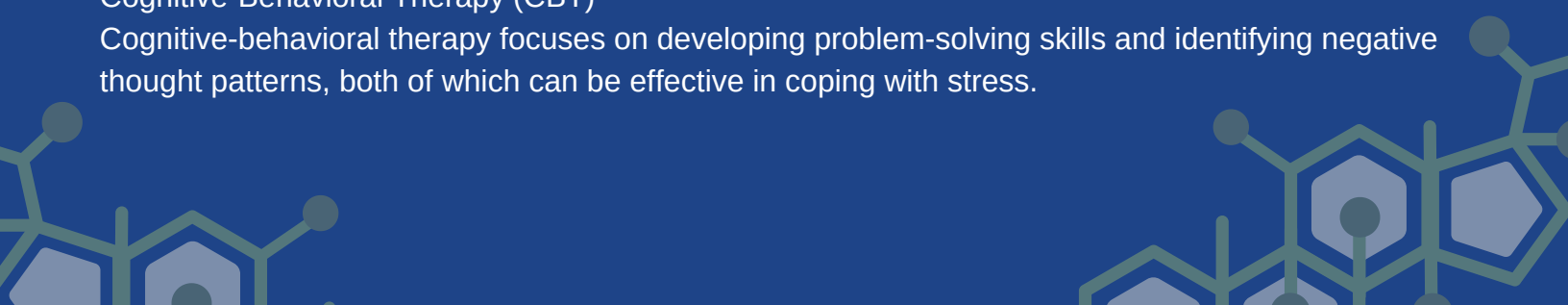
Research suggests that mindfulness exercises, such as guided meditation and grounding techniques, may be effective in helping you stay in the moment rather than focusing on your stress. This may allow you to slow down and turn your attention to more positive thoughts.

## Relaxation Therapy

Your sympathetic nervous system activates your body's stress response, including a faster heart rate, sweaty palms, and tense muscles. Meanwhile, your parasympathetic nervous system relaxes your body and mind after the stress has passed. Various kinds of relaxation therapy—such as biofeedback, deep diaphragmatic breathing, and progressive muscle relaxation—have been found to help in regulating the parasympathetic nervous system. Over time, this can reduce the effects of ongoing stress.

## Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive-behavioral therapy focuses on developing problem-solving skills and identifying negative thought patterns, both of which can be effective in coping with stress.



## Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

Originally designed to treat borderline personality disorder (BPD), DBT combines some aspects of CBT with the principles of mindfulness in order to improve emotional regulation.

## Medication

If you have a mental health condition related to stress, your healthcare provider may also prescribe medication, such as antidepressants or anti-anxiety medicines, to help manage your symptoms.

## Lifestyle Management

Finally, your healthcare provider may recommend making various lifestyle changes to reduce your stress, such as:

- Exercising regularly
- Spending quality time with family and friends
- Making time for a relaxing hobby
- Avoiding caffeine and other stimulants
- Prioritizing sleep



# Mental Health Tips for the Aging

## It Begins with Physical Health

Although you will learn mental health tips for successful aging, we have to start with your daily activities which involves taking good care of your body. To assist you in living your best life in your senior years, adopt these habits for a healthy lifestyle:

- Exercise regularly and be active.
- Spend more time standing.
- Eat nutritiously.
- Get enough sleep.
- Go to sleep and wake up the same time each day.
- Live smoke-free.
- Limit your consumption of alcohol.
- Go for regular doctor check-ups.

## Maintain Social Connections

An essential way to age in a healthy manner is to continue to interact with family and friends. Because older adults might suffer from hearing or vision loss, or not be able to drive at night, it's important they don't feel socially isolated.

Social isolation and loneliness can have dire consequences. The National Institute on Aging says social isolation and loneliness have been linked to higher risks for heart disease, obesity, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease.



**LEARN NEW THINGS FOR HEALTHY COGNITIVE FUNCTION**

# THE MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF MAGNESIUM GLYCINATE

Minerals are essential to proper nutrition. Magnesium in particular is sometimes thought to be helpful in the management of a variety of conditions, including migraine, alcoholism, asthma, cardiovascular diseases, arrhythmias, renal calcium stones, premenstrual disorders.

Magnesium may also be helpful in reducing physical symptoms like headaches, muscle pain, back pain, and stomach pain in certain conditions. In addition, there is some evidence magnesium can potentially benefit mental health by acting as a mood booster, muscle relaxer, stress reducer, and sleep aid.

Magnesium plays a vital role in health maintenance, but receiving the recommended dietary allowance from food is often challenging. The magnesium dietary reference intake for adults is 310–420 mg/d, but most consume below these recommendations. Since most cannot reach the recommended amounts through diet, it is convenient to use magnesium supplements.



# MAGNESIUM DEFICIENCY

There are many risk factors for an individual to develop a magnesium deficiency, such as alcohol use disorders, older age, malabsorption, and conditions like type 2 diabetes.

There are several mental disorders and symptoms that have been associated with magnesium deficiency, such as the following:

## Related Disorders

- Anxiety disorders
- Mood disorders
- Postpartum depression
- Addiction
- ADHD

## Symptoms

- Mood symptoms
- Sleep symptoms
- Stress
- Anxiety symptoms
- Irritability



# How to Stop Constant Worry and Anxiety

Given its link to anxiety, it is no surprise that worry is common among those diagnosed with panic disorder. Constant anxiety that seems to occur without any specific source may be a sign of generalized anxiety disorder.

There are certain worries that are frequently experienced by those with this condition. For example, people with panic disorder often worry about when they will experience their next panic attack. Those with agoraphobia worry so much about their physical symptoms that they are often prone to engaging in avoidance behaviors, finding it difficult at times to engage in their regular activities.

## **Exercise**

Engaging in physical activity may help prevent or treat anxiety. Studies have found that getting regular physical activity can help protect against feelings of anxiety. Even brief periods of exercise can be a great way to relieve feelings of anxiety and take your mind off of your worry.

## **Focus on What You Can Control**

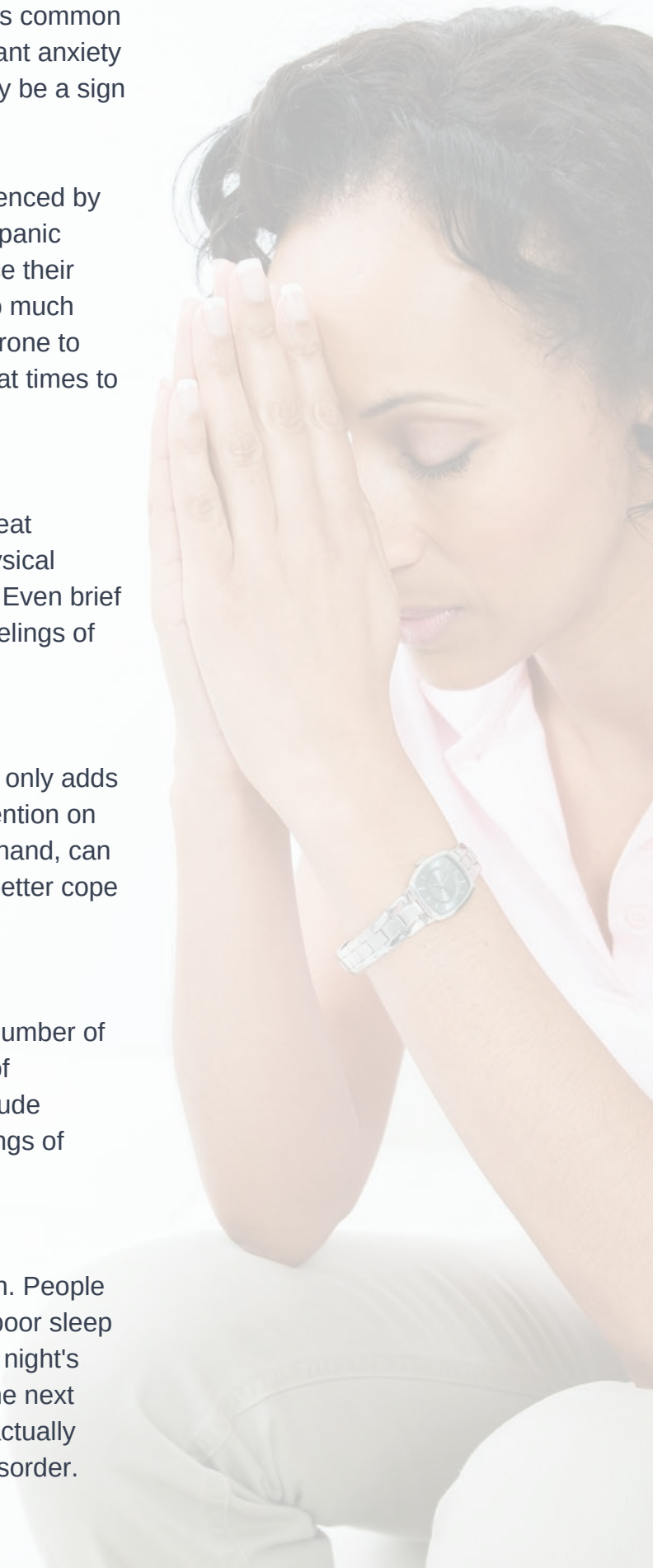
Worrying about the things you have no control over only adds to feelings of stress and anxiety. Focusing your attention on the things that are under your control, on the other hand, can help you feel more empowered and may help you better cope with your worries.

## **Practice Gratitude**

Experiencing gratitude has been shown to have a number of positive health effects, including reducing feelings of anxiety. Spending a few moments writing in a gratitude journal each day may help you better manage feelings of constant anxiety and worry.

## **Get Enough Sleep**

Sleep has a complex relationship with mental health. People who are worried or anxious tend to sleep less, but poor sleep can also contribute to problems with anxiety. A bad night's sleep might leave you feeling irritable and moody the next day, but prolonged periods of sleep problems can actually increase your likelihood of developing an anxiety disorder.



# Mental Health Options at Health For All

- In-person psychotherapy
- Telehealth

## Health For All

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Don't WORRY  
Be HAPPY