

Deepak Chopra Reveals 7 Mindful Ways to Reduce Stress and Anxiety

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With busy schedules and constant societal pressure, stress and anxiety are no strangers to most of us. It can be hard to unwind, relax and experience peace.

However, this is where mindfulness can help. Recent research has shown mindfulness strategies can not only reduce stress and anxiety, but can also make you more productive and happy as well.

Mindfulness expert Deepak Chopra recently sat down with Entrepreneur Magazine to discuss ways to reduce stress. I've summarized his most important points below:

1) Nourish your body and mind with healthy foods.

We all know that eating healthy is important for our body, but it can also affect our mind too. There is such a thing as a mind-body connection and keeping one healthy will also help the other.

Buddha knew this thousands of years ago:

“To keep the body in good health is a duty... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.”

According to Chopra, “Eating a pure diet, one free of toxins, is best for mind-body balance. That doesn't mean you can't have chocolate, though. Chocolate has been shown to release dopamine and serotonin, which make you happier.”

What about alcohol?

Chopra says that having one glass of alcohol “doesn't hurt”, however you should never go to bed “intoxicated”.

Why?

Because Chopra says that will “mess up with your microbiome, which is the 2 billion bacteria in your gut, something integral to your well-being overall.”

2) Get a good night's rest.

Getting adequate sleep is important to keep your mind functioning properly. A productive mind is a happy mind.

Chopra says that “the secret to good sleep is dynamic activity during the day, and the secret of dynamic activity is deep, restful sleep at night. The two go hand in hand. When this equilibrium is achieved, good sleep is effortless.”

If you have a day job that keeps you sitting down all day, it might be time to join a gym so you can get your activity levels up. Also, make sure you go to bed at a reasonable time to give you enough time to get your required sleep.

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3) Just breathe.

If you've read anything about meditation, you've probably heard to focus on your breathe if you want to meditate.

Well, it's true. Consciously breathing is a brilliant way to calm your self down, and it's fairly simple. All you have to do is focus on your breathe.

Chopra explains what to do: "Take a breathing break to take the pressure off. Observe your breath where you are, at your desk or anywhere. Start by consciously breathing in to the count of four and breathing out to the count of six, with a short pause in between."

According to Chopra, we normally breathe at about 14 breaths per minute, but if you follow this simple practice, you actually decrease your breathing to somewhere between eight to 10 breaths per minute.

4) Take a gratitude break.

Gratitude is a powerful practice. Plenty of research has found that it can reduce stress and make you feel happier. Chopra explains how it practice it:

"Sit for five minutes and meditate and reflect on what you're grateful for. Or, you can just be grateful for every breath for a couple of minutes at a time. Try using a simple mantra for manifesting gratitude, such as 'I am.' Repeat the mantra to yourself four or five times silently."

5) Wind down once a day.

We all need time for ourselves to just relax and do what we want to do. Chopra says that this is crucial to let our minds chill and just be.

"Embrace an active, daily stress-management routine. Once a day, make time to care for yourself by doing yoga or running, walking, watching comedy or getting a massage. You can also take in uplifting entertainment and culture, like art and music, poetry."

6) Nurture your relationships.

Did you know that a 75 year Harvard study found that relationships are the single most important in happiness?

Yep, so it's definitely worth it to dedicate time to them.

"Make sure that the relationships you have are emotionally healthy and foster love, compassion, joy and equanimity. People who compliment you genuinely about your strengths actually have a great impact on your well-being and also on your productivity. Criticizing, condemning and victimizing aren't helpful or productive..."

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7) Get grounded

Ever heard of grounding? It's when people walk barefoot on the beach, the grass or any other natural surfaces. They tend to report feeling better in the body and mind. Chopra explains why:

“The earth is a biosphere with negative and positive forces, like a battery, and your body is part of the battery. So take some time to walk barefoot on the earth, absorbing the free electrons, and recharge your battery.” If you follow these tips every day, you'll be well on your way to reducing stress and living the life you want.