

Path

PROGRAM



5-WEEK LIFESTYLE PROGRAM



Made by
Medwell



Week Four on the PATH

Week four on the PATH improves all parts of your life that matter for your weight and health that are not food related. We will emphasize relaxation, breathing, sleeping, playing and laughter.

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

► LEARN

- Why a stressful life can lead to weight gain and health issues
- Various ways you can control stress
- How to breathe

► RESOURCES

- Sleeping tips
- Breathing exercises
- Tips to help you feel calmer



Effects of Stress on the body

Stress causes the hormone cortisol to be released in our body. Not managing the stress in your life will cause your body to release an abundance of cortisol causing:

- An increase in blood glucose levels
- An increase in the breakdown of your muscle protein into amino acids (to make more glucose).
- An accumulation of fat in the trunk and face
- A reduction in tissue immune response to injury
- Antibody production to stop by decreasing the number of lymphocytes changes in skin
- Inhibits immune cell growth to effect ability to fight sickness
- The inflammation response your body needs to repair tissues to be suppressed
- Changes in behavior and cognitive function
- Gastric acid secretion, and may contribute to gastric reflux
- Normal bone formation to become inhibited
- Negative effects on mood
- Water retention
- Increase in food cravings



Sleep

Sleep deprivation disrupts your body's normal ability to process and control weight-related hormones such as glucose, cortisol, and thyroid hormones. An imbalance lowers your body's fat burning ability encouraging cells to store excess fat. A lack of sleep may also make it harder to control cravings. However, getting three consecutive full nights of sleep will reverse this.

Here are some tips to help you sleep better and fall asleep faster!

- Get up and go to bed the same time every day (even on weekends!) When your sleep cycle has a regular rhythm, you will feel better.
- Refrain from intense exercise right before bedtime.
- Develop sleep rituals to give your body cues that it's time to slow down and sleep.
- Only use your bed for sleeping. Refrain from using your bed to watch TV, work, or talk on phone.
- Stay away from caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol at least 4–6 hours before bed.
- Take a hot bath before bedtime. A hot bath will raise your body temperature, but it is the drop-in body temperature that can leave you drowsy.
- Make sure your bed and bedroom are quiet and comfortable.
- Use sunlight to set your biological clock. When you get up in the morning, open your curtains to let the sun in.



Breathing Exercises

Breathing Your Body Away

Gently focus your attention on the sensations of your feet and legs. Now, inhale a long, slow breath. As you do, breathe in all the sensations from your feet and legs. In your mind's eye, imagine that you are erasing this part of your body. Now, as you exhale, breathe out all those sensations. Once again, breathe in your feet and legs, exhale them from your body, so that in your mind you only see from your hips up. With another long breath, breathe in all the parts of your body to your neck, and, as you exhale, breathe it away. Now, beginning with your fingers, breathe into your fingers, hands, wrists and arms, and exhale them away. Now, your neck and head. As you breathe in, imagine your neck and head being erased and, now, breathe them away. Go back over the whole body in one breath, beginning with the feet. A long, slow breath in, and as you do, erase any little parts that remain. Now, a long slow breath out, as you exhale all the remaining parts. Sit quietly for a minute and enjoy feeling yourself relax deeper and deeper.

A Favorite Scene, Place or Person

Sitting quietly, recall a relaxing thought. Perhaps it's a favorite place, a vacation spot, person, or pet. Let that thought take over your whole awareness. If your thoughts wander, just take them gently back to that peaceful, relaxing image.

Cool Air In, Warm Air Out

While relaxing, quietly with your eyes closed, gently focus on the end of your nose. As you breathe in, feel the air coming in the tip of your nose. As you breathe out, feel the air coming out the tip of your nose. Notice that the air coming in is cooler than the air going out. Gently focus on that. As your attention wanders, gently bring it back to the tip of your nose.

Focus on a Word

Pick a word that you associate with relaxation, comfort, peace, etc. Now, just let that word hold the center of your thoughts. After a while, perhaps your mind will drift to other gentling, restful thoughts. If so, just let it wander. When it does drift to stressful thoughts, move back to your original word.

Belly Breathing

Belly breathing stimulates relaxation and calm. To practice this, lay on your bed and put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach. Practice breathing until you can feel your stomach move but not your chest. Once you have mastered this, you can do this anywhere.



Practice your calm by checking your breathing

When you monitor your breathing, it will allow you to relax yourself quicker and become more aware of the situations that negatively affect your breathing. Periodically check your breathing throughout your day during different situations such as these:

- When you first wake up
- After being stuck in heavy traffic
- After an argument
- Before a big meeting/event
- When you start to imagine stressful thoughts

If you notice that you are predominantly taking quick, shallow breaths, try to get yourself into the habit of taking slow, deep breaths. This will prevent you from feeling that “hyper-ventilation” feeling. During stressful situations, taking slow, deep belly breathing will have a calming effect over your body allowing you to relax easier and reduce those feelings of tension and helplessness.



Additional Tips to help you feel calmer:

- Incorporate some 'playtime' into your schedule. Take the time to practice a hobby or spend time with a friend that brings you joy.
- Mentally practice being relaxed, and your body will follow.
- Become more sensual; take in the smell of flowers and the taste of food.
- Allow yourself to be present in the moment.
- Laugh; more-numerous studies have been done to show the positive impact laughter has over the body.
- When you feel tense, take a 30 second 'time-out' to somewhere quiet and practice belly breathing.
- Remember that you can't do everything or be everything.
- Put aside some time each day to sort through your worries. Decide what is in your control to handle and what you must let go of.
- Create grateful lists.
- Know when to withdraw from situations to prevent yourself from getting worked up.
- Develop healthy communication skills.
- Clear up clutter.