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## THERAPEUTIC YOGA—MOVING INTO STILLNESS

~ by Megan Hatch, RYT

Stress is part of being human. While stress itself is not necessarily unhealthy, the way our bodies respond to it may be. When the body feels stress, heart and respiratory rates increase, pupils dilate, hearing becomes more acute, blood is diverted toward muscles and glucose levels rise – all to support a fast response to what the body perceives as danger. When the danger passes, the body returns to normal functioning.

When we don't sense the passing of danger – if nearly everything in our lives feels like an emergency – we begin to wear out physically, mentally and emotionally. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, two-thirds of doctor visits are stress-related.

One way to reduce stress is to practice yoga. Yoga involves much more than mastering a certain pose. Yoga is an ancient practice used to create and maintain balance in body, mind and spirit. The word yoga means union; the coming together of various parts into a unified whole. Yoga brings us back into balance through the practice of breath-work, physical postures and meditation.

Yoga helps its practitioners find a place of stillness within themselves so they can relax and rejuvenate. Abbott Northwestern Hospital has joined a growing number of integrative medicine programs that offer yoga as a healing and self-care modality. In addition to calming stress,

research shows that yoga can help individuals dealing with chronic pain, multiple sclerosis, migraine headaches, fibromyalgia and cancer. Recently the Yoga Alliance, a national organization of certified yoga teachers, has joined with the American Psychological Association as a cooperating organization in its work with mind-body medicine.

A yoga session begins with breathing deep, full breaths. Breath is a body function that we can consciously control. By learning to breathe deeply and efficiently, we develop a tool that can short-circuit the stress response. Then, with awareness, we move into, hold and release yoga postures to reduce physical tension. As tension lessens, our breath deepens even more. Just as a chronic stress response can exacerbate emotional and mental distress, quiet relaxation can calm our minds and spirits. We move slowly, with attention, into this stillness. By cultivating quiet awareness and acceptance of ourselves through yoga, we increase our range of motion physically, mentally and emotionally. We begin to have more options about how we respond to the events in our lives.

For more information, contact Megan Hatch, RYT, 612-863-6510 or [megan.hatch@allina.com](mailto:megan.hatch@allina.com).



See the calendar on page 4 for the current yoga class schedule. To sign up for a yoga class or to schedule a private appointment, call 612-863-3333.

## HURRICANE KATRINA: THE STRUGGLE WITH COMPASSION

~ by Linda Flies Carole, PsyD

Hurricane Katrina created a wake of unprecedented generosity, support, criticism, heartbreak, mourning, terror and trauma that touched all people. We often think that bad times and crisis bring us together. However, those challenges can also pull us apart. While Minnesota's role in support was more limited than other regions, many here were deeply touched by the suffering they observed. In fact, some people may be traumatized from a distance. On some level, they can identify with Katrina's survivors and those who died.

When does compassion and the desire to help become a source of distress? It may happen if you or a loved one has had similar experiences or losses. The images of Katrina or similar disasters may trigger memories that affect you physically and emotionally and even test your spiritual beliefs. Signs of this distress may include behavioral and emotional changes such as:

- ❖ more intense and less predictable feelings
- ❖ distractibility
- ❖ repeatedly searching the media images
- ❖ problems sleeping
- ❖ irritability with friends and family
- ❖ generalized feelings of worry and restlessness
- ❖ anger that is too intense for the situation.

There are ways to promote our own healing in the aftermath of a disaster:

- ❖ Be alert to needs that you can reasonably meet. However, if the media stories create more distress and the news is not new, turn off the TV or put down the newspaper or magazine.
- ❖ Take a healing time-out. Reconnect with nature, have fun with family and friends or see a funny movie. You are not abandoning the survivors if you remember them and then move on.
- ❖ Hold the intention that each and every survivor will find healing. If prayer is part of your spiritual practice, pray not with desperation but with confidence in your higher power.

Finally, if your feelings are truly too big for the situation, talk with someone. If memories are creating dreams or flashbacks to your own pain, perhaps talking with a therapist or spiritual advisor will plant your feet more firmly on the healing path. Self-care first is necessary if we are to be there for those we love.

For more information, contact Linda Flies Carole, PsyD, 612-863-5765, or [Linda.Carole@allina.com](mailto:Linda.Carole@allina.com).



## INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR INTEGRATIVE THERAPIES

The Institute for Health and Healing is now able to bill insurance companies for acupuncture, mind-body therapies and nutrition consultations. To bill any type of procedure or service to insurance, the patient must:

- ❖ have a physician order stating a medical diagnosis and reason to treat
- ❖ determine if the service is covered by his or her insurance plan.

If the service is covered and the patient has a physician order, he or she can schedule an appointment. The Institute for Health and Healing subsequently bills the insurance company. For more information about the services and the medical conditions that are indicated for these therapies, please call the Institute for Health and Healing's Outpatient Center at 612-863-3333.





## FITNESS CORNER

News from our exercise physiologist

### USING EXERCISE TO CONTROL STRESS

~ by Jeana Beberg, MA, RCEP

People who exercise regularly often report that exercise makes them feel better. Their stress level is lower when they are exercising regularly. Some even notice a distinct difference on days they exercise compared to days they do not. Exercise stimulates the production of brain chemicals called neurotransmitters. Neurotransmitters are believed to affect our emotions and moods, which may be one reason why exercise reduces feelings of stress and increases feelings of well-being.

Exercise relieves stress in several ways. It can help you:

- ❖ **feel less anxious** – exercise is often prescribed to treat nervous tension or anxiety. Clinicians have measured a decrease in electrical activity and muscle tension following exercise.
- ❖ **create a sense of accomplishment** – physical activity often enhances feelings of self-worth, which contributes to stress relief.
- ❖ **eat better** – people who exercise regularly tend to eat more nutritious food – and good nutrition helps your body manage stress better.
- ❖ **relax** – exercise produces endorphins, which helps the body relax. Just one exercise session can generate 90 to 120 minutes of this relaxation response.

The key to using exercise to reduce stress is to make physical activity part of your regular schedule. Here are some suggestions to help you get started.

- ❖ **Aerobic exercise.** All it takes is 20 minutes a day and it can be as simple as taking a walk. Try walking during your lunch break.
- ❖ **Yoga.** In yoga, your mind relaxes progressively as you work various muscles. Recent studies show that when large muscle groups repeatedly contract and relax, the brain releases specific neurotransmitters that make you feel more relaxed and alert. (See related article on page 1.)
- ❖ **Recreational sports.** Tennis, racquetball, basketball, volleyball or running are examples of vigorous games and activities that rid your body of stress hormones like adrenaline.
- ❖ **Lifestyle activity.** Add activity to your daily routine by taking the stairs, parking further away from building entrances and walking up the escalator.

Choosing the right setting for exercise may also be an important consideration. Exercise outdoors when possible. Consider taking a class or enjoy the solitude of solo exercise. Your preferences depend on your personality and what you find most relaxing.



For more information, contact Jeana Beberg, MA, RCEP, exercise physiologist, 612-863-5178 or [Jeana.Beberg@allina.com](mailto:Jeana.Beberg@allina.com).





INSTITUTE FOR  
HEALTH AND HEALING

**November/December  
2005**

## INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND HEALING: **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Registration is required for all classes unless otherwise noted. To register or for more information, call 612-863-3333.

### ***Series Programs***

#### **Yoga for the Lower Back**

- ❖ 6-week series, beginning Nov. 7
- ❖ Mondays, 5:30-6:45 p.m.
- ❖ \$79

#### **Therapeutic Yoga for Cancer**

- ❖ 6-week series, beginning Nov. 7
- ❖ Mondays, 7-8:15 p.m.
- ❖ \$79

### ***One-Time Classes***

#### **Healing Her Heart: Stress Mastery for Women**

- ❖ Wednesday, Nov. 2, 6:30-8 p.m.
- ❖ 1.5 CEUs for nurses
- ❖ \$10

#### **Community Drum Circle**

- ❖ Thursdays, Nov. 17, and  
Dec. 15, 7-8 p.m.
- ❖ \$5

#### **Supporting Infertility Treatment with Acupuncture**

- ❖ Wednesday, Nov. 9, 6:30-8 p.m.
- ❖ 1.5 CEUs for nurses
- ❖ \$10

#### **Nutritional Support for Fibromyalgia**

- ❖ Tuesday, Nov. 15, 6:30-8 p.m.
- ❖ 1.5 CEUs for nurses
- ❖ \$10

#### **How Can Energy Healing Benefit You?**

- ❖ Tuesday, Nov. 29, 6:30-8 p.m.
- ❖ 1.5 CEUs for nurses
- ❖ \$10

#### **Acupuncture and Low Back Pain**

- ❖ Wednesday, Nov. 30, 7-8 p.m.
- ❖ 1 CEU for nurses
- ❖ \$10

#### **Couples Massage Level II**

- ❖ Tuesday, Dec. 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- ❖ \$40/couple

#### **Couples Yoga**

- ❖ Wednesday, Dec. 7, 6:30-8 p.m.
- ❖ \$30/couple

#### **Managing High Blood Pressure and Stroke with Acupuncture**

- ❖ Tuesday, Dec. 13, 7-8 p.m.
- ❖ 1 CEU for nurses
- ❖ \$10

#### **The Zen of Juggling**

- ❖ Wednesday, Dec. 14, 6:30-8 p.m.
- ❖ 1.5 CEUs for nurses
- ❖ \$10

### ***Special Events***

#### **The Art of Healing: Works on Paper By Ellen Shillace**

- ❖ Show opening: Friday,  
Nov. 9, 7-9 p.m.
- ❖ Artist Talk: Wednesday,  
Nov. 16, 6:30-7:30 p.m.