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well-being at work

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Water & Your Health

Water helps reduce the risk of chronic diseases



FROM THE EXPERT

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Given that the body is more than 70% water, it is no wonder that our water consumption has a profound effect on our health. The body loses water every day, which needs to be replaced; on average, 2.9 litres for men, and 2.2 litres for women. Studies have demonstrated that people who do not consume an adequate amount of water are at greater risk for certain chronic diseases.

According to the American Journal of Epidemiology, the risk factors associated with coronary heart disease are elevated by dehydration. It reports that drinking high amounts of water is

as important as exercise, diet, or not smoking in preventing the disease.

In a recent study¹ individuals who drank five or more glasses of water per day reduced the risk of fatal coronary heart disease by 46% in men and 59% in women. By contrast, the consumption of other fluids was associated with an increased risk.

Similar studies have found a link between hydration and certain forms of cancer. One study² found that the risk of breast cancer was reduced by 79% among women who regularly consumed adequate amounts of water.

Dehydration has been implicated in a number of conditions affecting the bladder, prostate, and kidneys, including cancer and kidney stones. One study³ has found that patients commonly do not

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Did you know...

...that exercise burns off stress hormones?

Stressful events produce the hormone adrenaline; if adrenaline is not used by the body, you will feel uptight, have higher blood pressure, and find it difficult to relax.

Exercise is a good way to use this burst of energy. Regular exercise over longer periods of time also increases endorphins, helping to improve your mood. What's more, exercise also improves your energy levels by increasing the oxygenation of blood tissues.



Breathing, a simple method to help you stress less

What is Stress?

Stress is the body's natural response to pressures or stressful situations. Stress sets off an alarm in the brain to prepare the body for defensive action. Certain hormones like adrenaline are released to sharpen the senses, quicken the pulse, deepen the breathing and tighten the muscles. Some stress is beneficial, as it energizes and motivates us, but if it goes on too long it can lead to mental and physical ill health.

What is relaxation?

Relaxation is the opposite of the stress response. Instead of tight muscles, shallow breathing, irritable mood and a busy mind, a relaxed body has loose muscles, deeper breathing, and a calm mind.

There are a number of relaxation methods. Most experts believe the key to coping with stressful situations lies in combating the stress response



cycle when it occurs. One way this can be done is through changing how you breathe.

Breathing affects your whole body. Notice how when you are angry your breathing becomes irregular, whilst fear and stress produce quick

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consume enough water (less than 2.4 litres of water per day). An investigation¹ demonstrated that the risk of these forms of cancer diminished with each additional 240 ml of water consumed. Other forms of fluids were also studied, but none has as much impact as pure water.

Because drinking water is a simple lifestyle change that anybody can do, this simple practice has the potential of improving many people's quality of life and ultimately saving many lives.

¹ Chan et al, *Water, Other Fluids, and Fatal Coronary Heart Disease*
² Stookey et al, *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev.* 1997
³ Bitteman et al, *Urologic Clin North Am.* 1991
⁴ Michaud et al, *New England Journal of Medicine.* 1999

Breathing, a simple method to help you stress less

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and shallow breaths. In a relaxed state your breathing is slow, deep, and regular.

Breath Test

Place one hand on your chest and one on your stomach. Breathe normally for 30 seconds. If the hand on your chest is moving, you are like most people and are not using the simplest yet most effective stress management technique available.

The key to breathing correctly is to allow your diaphragm to do the work, and not your ribs. Try the test in the box above to see how you breathe now. Try the test again, this time breathing from your stomach. Breathe gently for several minutes until you get used to it. By taking a few seconds to breathe this way in a stressful situation, you encourage a relaxed state throughout your body.

Source: Healthworks Corporate

The Professional Pause Taking a break can help to keep you in one piece.



FROM THE EXPERT

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Method® practitioner

As modern workplaces become ever more computerized, we now spend most of our working time in sedentary postures and often in rather uncomfortable positions. Absorbed by the "virtual world" we tend to pay less and less attention our physical sensations and bodily needs.

There is a growing recognition of the importance of taking frequent breaks during the workday. Employees can benefit from a moment of relaxation and rejuvenation, which improves their productivity and efficiency. In addition, many occupational illnesses and injuries caused by repeated traumas and accumulated fatigue, could be prevented by simply taking a break! These 'professional pauses' prove to be beneficial both to individual health and to the company's bottom line.

Some debate remains on whether breaks should be passive or active, namely, should

people stretch or just remain motionless, but there is no doubt as to the importance of the professional pause. Taking a moment away from whatever you are doing helps give the body and mind a rest, thereby reducing physical strain and mental stress.

The professional pause also provides a moment for social bonding, and an opportunity to meet the body's physiological need for water. It is in these moments of movement, refreshment and recuperation that employees can enhance their individual well-being, which ultimately improves the company's performance.

Techniques such as the Grinberg Method® can help employees and companies maximize well-being in modern workplace conditions. Through a program of simple tools and exercises, individuals can learn to avoid accumulating tensions, stress and damaging routines, while optimizing their productivity.

For further information visit:
www.grinbergmethodschool-eylam.com

Eylam Langotsky is a licensed teacher of the Grinberg Method® and directs the project "Bodywork in Business Environment", wellbeing workshops for corporations.



COMING UP IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Nutrition

The impact of proper eating habits for improved health.

Water in School

Are our children getting enough?

Well-being at Work

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The information in this publication does not provide medical advice for individual problems. For advice and treatment, consult your doctor or health care professional.

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