



Stress-Induced Hypertension

High blood pressure is defined as anything over 120 mmHg (top number) or over 80 mmHg (bottom number).¹ When you experience stress, hormones like adrenaline and cortisol make your heart beat faster, which causes blood vessels to constrict and ultimately raises blood pressure. Usually, these hormone surges are temporary, but if stress is prolonged, these hormones stay elevated and the effects can lead to stress-induced hypertension, which can take a toll on your heart, blood vessels, and kidneys.

Implementing the following techniques can you maintain a healthy blood pressure:^{2,3}

- **Practice Mindfulness:** Regular meditation and relaxation techniques can help lower stress hormones and promote relaxation. Just a few minutes each day can make a noticeable difference in your stress levels.
- **Be Physically Active:** Exercise is a powerful tool for stress management. Activities such as walking, swimming, or yoga can help lower blood pressure by improving cardiovascular health and reducing stress hormones.
- **Establish Healthy Sleep Habits:** Quality sleep is crucial for managing stress. Aim for 7 to 9 hours of restful sleep each night, and establish a regular sleep schedule.
- **Foster Social Connections:** Strong relationships and support networks can buffer the effects of stress. Make time to connect with friends and family, and seek professional support if needed.
- **Adopt a Balanced Diet:** A diet rich in fruits, vegetables,

whole grains, and lean proteins can help manage blood pressure. Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables are all healthy options. Avoid excessive caffeine, sodium, and processed foods that can elevate stress and blood pressure levels.

- **Limit Alcohol:** Alcohol can intensify emotions, which can trigger a stress response in the body. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.

Stress can take a serious toll on your body. Better blood pressure management begins with understanding the role of stress and actively working to find effective ways to manage it. Preventing and managing stress-induced hypertension requires self-awareness and a focus on self-care.

1. American Heart Association. Understanding Blood Pressure Readings. Accessed October 26, 2024. <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/understanding-blood-pressure-readings>

2. American Heart Association. "Managing Stress to Control High Blood Pressure." May 7, 2024. Accessed October 26, 2024. <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/changes-you-can-make-to-manage-high-blood-pressure/managing-stress-to-control-high-blood-pressure>

3. Mayo Clinic. "Stress and high blood pressure: What's the connection?" Accessed October 27, 2024. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/stress-and-high-blood-pressure/art-20044190>

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Creating Calm Within the Chaos

Life can feel chaotic at times, leading to feelings of overwhelm and loss of control. However, with the right tools and techniques, you can create calm within the chaos.

Here are several strategies to cultivate more peace:^{1,2}

- **Master Time Management:** Set clear priorities and break tasks into manageable steps. Use tools like planners or digital calendars to schedule your activities and deadlines. Allocate specific times for work, relaxation, and personal commitments. This will help you stay organized and avoid last-minute rushes.
- **Clear the Clutter:** A cluttered environment can contribute to a cluttered mind. Put things where they go and keep your spaces organized. Being able to find things when you need them can also reduce stress. Take some time to organize your workspace, home, and digital files.
- **Be Mindful:** Incorporate mindfulness practices into your daily routine to help manage stress. Techniques such as deep breathing exercises, meditation, and yoga can help calm your mind and body. Even a few minutes each day can make a significant difference in how you handle stress and chaos.
- **Establish Healthy Boundaries:** Learn to set boundaries in all areas of your life to prevent burnout. Communicate your limits clearly to colleagues and family members and make time for activities that rejuvenate you. Balance is key to maintaining both productivity and wellbeing.
- **Seek Support When Needed:** Seek support if you are feeling overwhelmed. Talking to a trusted friend, family member, or mental health professional can provide perspective and guidance. Sometimes, an external viewpoint can help you find solutions more easily.
- **Engage in Regular Exercise:** Physical activity is a powerful tool for managing stress. Engage in exercises that you enjoy, whether it is walking, running, or another activity that involves movement. Regular exercise helps release endorphins, which can improve your mood and overall sense of wellbeing.

By incorporating these strategies into your routine, you can create a more organized, calm, and balanced life.

1. Verywell Mind. "How to Be More Organized." November 07, 2023. Accessed October 27, 2024. <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-be-more-organized-6541406>

2. Verywell Mind. "How Clutter and Mental Health Are Connected." August 21, 2023. Accessed October 27, 2024. <https://www.verywellmind.com/decluttering-our-house-to-cleanse-our-minds-5101511>

3. Balance Through Simplicity. "How to Create a Calm Home: 20 Tips for A Peaceful Home." July 7, 2023. Accessed October 27, 2024. <https://balancethroughsimplicity.com/how-to-create-a-calm-family-home/>



Habits to Boost Brain Health

As you age, maintaining optimal brain health becomes increasingly vital. Healthy brain function influences memory, problem-solving skills, emotional regulation, and overall quality of life. By adopting specific strategies, you can enhance your brain health to support long-term mental acuity.

Here are effective ways to boost your brain health:^{1,2}

- **Move Your Body:** Physical activity, such as brisk walking, swimming, or any activity that increases your heart rate has been shown to increase blood flow to the brain, support new neural connections, and improve cognitive function.
- **Prioritize a Balanced Diet:** Consuming a diet that is rich in antioxidants, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals is essential for brain health. Foods such as berries, nuts, fatty fish, and leafy greens provide the nutrients necessary for maintaining cognitive function and protecting against neurodegenerative diseases.
- **Get Sufficient Sleep:** Quality sleep is necessary for essential brain functions, including memory consolidation and emotional regulation. Aim for 7-9 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night.
- **Stay Mentally Active:** Engaging in intellectually stimulating activities can help keep your brain sharp. Activities such as reading, crossword puzzles, learning a new skill or language, and working jigsaw puzzles stimulate different parts of the brain and encourage mental agility.
- **Manage Stress Effectively:** Chronic stress can have harmful effects on brain health, impacting memory, focus, and emotional wellbeing. Practice stress management techniques such as mindful meditation, deep-breathing exercises, or engaging in hobbies you enjoy to reduce stress.
- **Foster Positive Social Connections:** Maintaining strong social relationships has been linked to better brain health and cognitive longevity.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Proper hydration is vital for optimal brain function. Aim to drink adequate water throughout the day, as dehydration can negatively impact concentration, memory, and cognitive performance.
- **Avoid Harmful Habits:** Reducing or eliminating harmful habits such as smoking and excessive sugar and alcohol consumption can have a positive impact on brain health. These substances can impair cognitive function and increase the risk of neurodegenerative conditions.³

By integrating these practices into your daily routine, you can significantly enhance your brain health and overall wellbeing.

1. Mayo Clinic. "6 tips to keep your brain healthy." December 29, 2022. Accessed October 27, 2024. <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/5-tips-to-keep-your-brain-healthy>

2. Healthline. "14 Natural Ways to Improve Your Memory." February 14, 2023. Accessed October 27, 2024. <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/ways-to-improve-memory>

3. Pase MP, Himali JJ, Jacques PF, et al. Sugary beverage intake and preclinical Alzheimer's disease in the community. *Alzheimers Dement.* 2017;13(9):955-964. doi:10.1016/j.jalz.2017.01.024

CALMING CHAMOMILE LAVENDER TEA

Ingredients

- 1 chamomile tea bag
- 1/2 teaspoon dried lavender flowers
- 1 teaspoon honey (optional)

Instructions

1. Steep the chamomile tea bag and dried lavender flowers in hot water for 5-7 minutes.
2. Add honey for sweetness if desired.
3. Sip on this calming tea to relax and unwind after a stressful day.



Nutrition Facts (per serving)

Calories: 5

Protein: 0g

Carbohydrates: 2g

Fat: 0g

Fiber: 0g