



Minimizing Stress is **POWERFUL** Prevention

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STRESS. In our fast-paced culture, the level of stress we deal with everyday has escalated well beyond that of previous generations. Fighting through traffic, meeting deadlines, providing for our families, and even finding time to shop for groceries are all stresses that we deal with daily. Our bodies absorb this stress. Without an opportunity for release, chronic tension makes us susceptible to illness, disease, and dysfunction.



Stress has been implicated as an underlying cause of many diseases prevalent in society today, including heart disease, high blood pressure, immune system dysfunction, diabetes, ADD, migraines, and IBS. The good news is that we can all do a few simple things to minimize stress and prevent disease.

Fostering Awareness

An important step towards minimizing stress is simply to foster our awareness of it. Notice when a situation causes you stress, and how the stress feels in your body. What happens to your heart rate and breathing? Which muscles tense up? Do you start to shrug your shoulders or clench your jaw? Monitoring our reactions in the moment allows us to practice letting go of the tension we feel. Our bodies can relax, and we also learn what circumstances we may need to change or cope with differently.

Taking Time to Stop

In addition to monitoring our reactions, scheduling a *regular* time in our routine to stop, relax, and scan our bodies helps us to let go of stress. Activities like Massage Therapy, Yoga, and meditation bring us into the present moment, allow our muscles to work through tension, and actually improve circulation, encourage digestion, decrease pain, and improve sleep. These activities provide natural stress relief, make us feel great, and help to prevent stress-related disease.



Finding an Outlet for Stress Release

We can also channel our stress into positive energy through the activities we love. Regular exercise, sports, dancing, music, art, hobbies, and even singing in the car can be outlets for stress release. Relieving stress balances our bodies in several ways:



- *Relaxed muscles and joints* function better and are less prone to injury and pain
- *Release of positive neurotransmitters* like serotonin improves mood and sleep
- *Cortisol levels* decrease, preventing “stress weight gain” and boosting immunity
- *Deeper breathing* increases oxygen supply to tissues; concentration improves and tension, anxiety, and headaches dissolve.
- *Digestion improves*, food cravings decrease, and energy improves.

Choosing a method of stress reduction is an essential step towards improving your health. Not only will you feel better now, you will also improve your well-being for the years to come!



Danielle Ouimette is a Licensed Massage Therapist and specializes in Deep Tissue massage, Myofascial Release, Craniosacral Therapy, Hot Stone and Sports massage.