



CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

**Stress Busters: Tools to Alleviate Stress  
in Tumultuous Times**

Wednesday, December 10, 2003

**Bay Area Discovery Museum, Sausalito**

**Program Overview**

Are you stressed out at work from budget cuts, lay-offs, working overtime, and lacking the resources and time necessary to get your job done? Would you like to learn how to reduce some of this stress? Join us for a stress-busting afternoon with speakers who will provide advice for reducing stress, fun-filled activities, and plenty of time for networking.

Today's program consisted of two presentations by health specialists David Wells and Dario Fredrick. The speakers focused on things we can do as busy professionals to feel better and heighten our energy level. After the presentations, a raffle was held for 8 ten minute chair massages and one coupon for a complimentary day at Kabuki Hot Springs in San Francisco. The rest of the program was free time for networking, enjoying soothing live music, adding favorite stress-reducing ideas to the graffiti wall, and creating an Art Comfort Kit (a stress reduction art kit provided by the San Jose Museum of Art).

**Speakers**

David Wells, Personal chef, fitness trainer, and nutritionist. Founded Nutra Coach.

Dario Fredrick, Holds Master's Degree in Exercise Science, has studied yoga for more than 10 years in India and the US.

**Presentation by David Wells**

There are six essential nutrients for stress tolerance:

1. Fats

Omega three fats are "good fats" and are important to incorporate into your diet. Examples: Olive oil, fish. Hydrogenated oils are "bad fats" and are prevalent in many processed foods.

2. Proteins

Our bodies build protein from the eight essential amino acids derived from food. If you eat fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, or sprouts on a regular basis, you are receiving all the amino acids necessary for your body to build the protein it needs. Eat meat in limited quantities, especially beef and pork, which take 14 to 16 hours to digest. A good meat choice is chicken or fish. Shop for fish carefully – choose wild fish rather than farm raised.

3. Carbohydrates

Raw vegetables are best. Try to avoid refined foods, genetically modified foods.

4. Vitamins

Ideally one can get all the vitamins they need from whole food sources. Example: Vitamins A,D,E,K are found in whole grains. Taking every day supplements is good second choice.

## 5. Minerals

Potassium found in bananas, iron is found in nuts and seeds.

## 6. Water

Choose your water carefully. Don't drink water from cheap plastic containers with numbers 1 or 2 on bottom as plastic leaches into the water. Containers with higher numbers – four (?) or higher best.

David demonstrated a breathing exercise to lower heart rate and reduce stress:

- Put your tongue behind your top teeth.
- Take full deep breath in for a count of four.
- Exhale out for a count of eight. As you do this make an audible noise (a hissing type sound).
- Then remain still for a count of four.
- Repeat process a number of times.

David also distributed two healthy recipes: Ginger-Butternut-Orange Soup & Miso Soup. See handout at conclusion of program notes.

## Presentation by Dario Fredrick

Dario led participants through a number of yoga poses that can be done at your desk throughout your workday to relieve stiffness and reduce stress. See handout at conclusion of program notes for yoga poses and tips.

## **Stress Relief Ideas**

Breathing exercises  
Meditation  
Yoga  
Massage  
Guided Imagery- Visualization  
Chi-Gung  
Walking  
Laughing  
Singing  
Ocean air  
Jump on small trampoline for lymphatic movement  
Re-uniting with loved ones  
Spiritual enhancement  
Aromatherapy

## **Food Suggestions**

Drink freshly juiced Vegetables  
Eat cruciferous vegetables daily  
Ginger tea  
Burdock root  
Plenty of garlic  
Eliminate or moderate dairy from diet  
Eat or drink organic raw miso  
Moderate animal products- only eat organically raised hormone and antibiotic free  
Avoid sugar, nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol  
Avoid refined and modified foods

## **Common symptoms of stress**

### **Level 1)**

- Losing interest in enjoyable activities
- Sagging of the corners of the eyes
- Creasing of the forehead
- Becoming short tempered
- Boredom
- Nervousness

### **Level 2)**

- Tiredness
- Anger
- Insomnia
- Paranoia
- Sadness

### **Level 3)**

- Chronic head and neck aches
- High blood pressure
- Upset stomach
- Looking older

### **Level 4)**

- Skin disorders
- Kidney malfunction
- Susceptibility to frequent infections
- Asthma
- Heart disease
- Mental breakdown

## **Common causes of stress**

- Emotional and/or psychological problems
- Overuse of drugs and/or prescription medicine
- Work addiction
- Fatigue-lack of rest
- Too much tobacco, caffeine, or alcohol
- Allergies
- Hypoglycemia
- Vitamin and mineral depletion
- Noise, air, and environmental pollutants
- Overcrowding
- Job pressure, unemployment, poverty
- Marital and social problems

## ***Ginger-Butternut-Orange Soup***

### **Some Nutritional Benefits**

High in powerful antioxidants: Vitamins A (beta carotene), C. Low calorie source potassium and folate. High in fiber. Excellent for improving circulation, and relieving nausea and indigestion.

*Makes approximately 10 (12 oz.) servings*

Prep time: 45 minutes

Cooking time: approx. 2.5 hours

### **Ingredients:**

1 Tb.            olive oil  
1 lg.            onion, sliced  
1/4 cup        ginger, peeled and sliced  
2-4 cloves     garlic, thinly sliced  
1 cup          rice wine or sake  
1 lg.          butternut squash, peeled seeded and rough cut  
3                quarts H2O  
3 Tb          orange zest (orange part of skin only)  
1/2 bu.        cilantro, chopped  
1/2 bu.        scallions, thinly sliced on bias (angle)  
Salt and pepper to taste

### **Method:**

Heat soup pot on medium heat w/olive oil until smoking.

Sautee onions, garlic, and ginger for 2 to 3 minutes until translucent.

Add rice wine and simmer for 2-3 minutes.

Add butternut squash and 2 quarts of H2O.

Simmer slowly for 2 hours.

Ladle contents into a blender and puree.

**CAUTION:** Always be very careful, pureeing hot food in as contents may erupt. You may want to remove the top and cover with a plate. Always leave some space for heat to escape.

If needed, you can adjust consistency w/remaining quart of H2O.

Return pureed mixture to rinsed pot, heat and simmer.

Add cilantro, orange zest, and scallions.

Season w/salt and pepper and serve.

## **Miso Soup**

1 T. olive oil  
1 T. ginger finely chopped  
1 T. garlic finely chopped  
1 T. lemon grass finely chopped  
1 qt. vegetable stock or water  
1/2 cup soy sauce (optional)  
1/4 cup seasoned rice vinegar (optional)  
10 oz. white or brown miso paste (unpasteurized, organic)  
12 oz. Tofu diced into 1/2 " cubes  
1 T. Scallions cut on a bias (angle)

**Method:**

Heat olive oil until hot in 2 gallon pot.  
Saute ginger, garlic, and lemon grass to develop flavor.  
Add vegetable stock and simmer for 20 min.  
Add all other ingredients and heat, but do not boil!

## **YOGA AT YOUR DESK**

by Dario Fredrick

Stress is not an inevitable consequence of the work place. Balance the body with simple physical actions and the stress response will follow.

Energy in the body responds to how we hold ourselves physically. Our posture while standing or sitting affects the energetic balance and thus the effects of stress.

It is possible to encourage balance and reduce stress using yoga-based techniques. The breath directs and affects the body's energy and is an effective tool to alleviate stress. Used together with basic physical movements and actions that balance and align the physical body, quality of breath can be the ultimate stress buster.

### **SOME BASIC TIPS**

- ?? Take frequent breaks from the computer.
- ?? Pause from whatever work task you are involved in (at least 4 times every hour), close the eyes and focus on taking a few smooth, even breaths.
- ?? Do not hold the phone between your ear and shoulder. Hold it with your hand or use a hands-free headset.
- ?? Sit tall in your chair with the shoulders relaxed, even when working at a computer.
- ?? Keep the jaw and face relaxed, especially when taking conscious breaths.
- ?? Set aside specific times during the work day to practice the few simple poses listed below.
- ?? Breathe.

## YOGA WHILE SEATED AT YOUR DESK

### Bound Extended Arms

1. Extend the spine, breathe while sitting up tall.
2. Extend the arms out in front of you.
3. Interlace the fingers and rotate the hands with the palms facing outward.
4. Extend the elbows straight.
5. Inhale and extend the arms overhead.
6. Exhale and externally rotate the arms at the shoulders.
7. Press upward more through the index-finger side of the hands.
8. Draw the elbows in toward each other.
9. Hold for 3-5 breaths then exhale and release the arms out to the sides and down.

### Arms Extended Behind

1. Sit backwards in your chair facing away from your desk, about two feet from the desk.
2. Extend the spine and breathe.
3. Keeping an upright seated posture, reach the arms behind placing the hands on the desk.
4. Open the hands and roll the shoulders back *without* bending from the low back.
5. Take the hands towards each other a bit, opening the chest.
6. Breathe and hold for a few breaths.

### Seated Twist

1. Sit sideways with the back of the chair to your right.
2. Place the knees over the ankles and the feet hip width.
3. Sit tall, with the spine well-extended.
4. Inhale and turn to hold the sides of the back of the chair.
5. Exhale, drop the shoulders and twist to the right.
6. Turn the head last.
7. Hold for a breath or two.
8. Inhale to untwist back to the starting point.
9. Swivel around to the other side and repeat to the left.

### Seated Forward Bend (head supported)

1. Sit upright in the chair with the knees over the ankles and the feet hip width.
2. Exhale and bend forward, resting the forehead near the edge of the desk.
3. Use a soft article of clothing under the forehead if desired.
4. Have the arms crossed in front of the head also resting on the desk.
5. Hold for as long as needed to calm the mind and breathe smoothly.
6. Inhale to sit back up.

## YOGA WHILE STANDING AT YOUR DESK

### L-Shape Forward Extension

1. Place open hands on the desk near the edge about shoulder-width apart.
2. Exhale and walk the feet back until the torso is extended parallel to the floor, and the legs are vertical and straight.
3. Place the feet under the hips, about hip-width apart with the toes pointing straight forward.
4. Breathe.
5. Externally rotate the upper arms at the shoulder.
6. Internally rotate the upper thighs.
7. Extend the spine keeping the head in a neutral position (not lifted nor dropped).
8. The crown of the head extends forward (toward the desk) and the hips and inner thighs draw back away from the desk.
9. Hold for 5-8 complete breaths.
10. Inhale and step in toward the desk to come up.

### Sideways Extended Pose

1. Stand about one foot from and facing the desk.
2. Stand with the feet hip-width, toes pointing straight forward.
3. Exhale and step the left foot straight back about 3-4 feet behind you.
4. Rotate the left toes out slightly, about 15-30 degrees.
5. Keeping the legs straight, with the next exhalation, walk the hands forward taking the torso forward, keeping it extended.
6. Keep the spine elongated and the torso straight rather than rounded forward (bend from the hips, not the spine).
7. Keep the head neutral, do not drop or lift it.
8. Press the left outer heel back and draw the right hip back as well.
9. Hold for a few breaths.
10. Inhale to take the left foot forward again, extending the torso back up.
11. Repeat on the other side.

*Dario Fredrick teaches monthly workshops at Turtle Island Yoga in San Rafael ([www.turtleislandyoga.com](http://www.turtleislandyoga.com)) and weekly yoga classes at the College of Marin. He has studied yoga for more than 10 years in both India and the US, and holds a Master's degree in exercise science. Dario can be reached at [dario@wholeathlete.com](mailto:dario@wholeathlete.com).*