

# ELEVATE

BY: VALKYRIE INVESTMENTS

Month 4:

# STRESS AWARENESS

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April, 2022

At Valkyrie, we are committed to education and growth, both industry-wide and personal. Each month of 2022 will focus on a theme with the goal of elevating personal and team wellness.

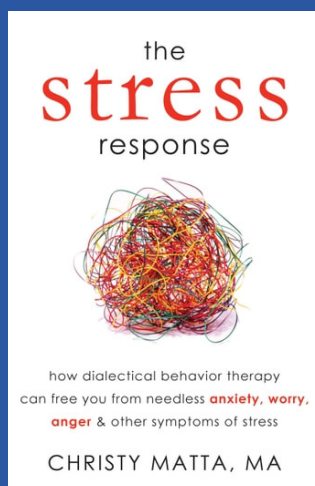
We are excited to continue our Wellness Program, Elevate, with a Month of Stress Awareness.

Follow along for de-stressing related activities, challenges, and volunteer suggestions.

Elevate your life.



[valkyrieinvest.com/elevate](https://valkyrieinvest.com/elevate)



We recommend pairing this month's Elevate program with The Stress Response (pictured)

ELEVATE

# BREATHWORK

This week's intention:

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## 12 Benefits of Breathwork

1. Improves immunity
  2. Clams down anxiety
  3. Increases sleep quality
  4. Decreases toxicity of the body
  5. Improves digestive system
  6. Good for cardiovascular health
  7. Improve concentration and cognitive properties
1. Gives healthy and glowing skin
  2. Reduces inflammation in th body
1. Helps sinusitis
  2. Makes the body and joints strong
  3. Strengthen lungs

*Our breath is a powerful tool to ease stress and make us feel less anxious. Some simple breathing exercises can make a big difference if we make them part of our regular routine.*

From the list above, what areas of my life could benefit from practicing proper breathing?

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# BREATHWORK



## Why Breathing Exercises Help

Over time, stale air builds up, leaving less room for the diaphragm to contract and bring in fresh oxygen. With the diaphragm not working to full capacity, the body starts to use other muscles in the neck, back, and chest for breathing. This translates into lower oxygen levels and less reserve for exercise and activity.



If practiced regularly, breathing exercises can help rid the lungs of accumulated stale air, increase oxygen levels and get the diaphragm to return to its job of helping you breathe.

**"Regulate the breathing, and thereby control the mind"**

B.K.S. Iyengar

# BREATHWORK

## Box Breathing



Hold 2...3...4...



Inhale 2...3...4...

Hold 2...3...4...

Exhale 2...3...4...

1. Inhale through the nose to a count of four, the lungs should be completely full of air
2. Hold the air in the lungs for a count of four
3. Exhale through the mouth to a count of four, all of the air should be out of the lungs.
4. Hold the lungs in an empty state for a count of four.
5. Repeat for a total of at least five minutes. When ready, increase the count to whatever feels comfortable.

**How do I feel after this exercise?**

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# BREATHWORK

This week's intention:

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## Progressive Muscle Relaxation



*In this technique, you breathe in as you tense a muscle group and breathe out as you release it. Progressive muscle relaxation helps you relax physically and mentally.*

1. Lie comfortably on the floor.
2. Take a few deep breaths to relax.
3. Breathe in. Tense the muscles of your feet.
4. Breathe out. Release the tension in your feet.
5. Breathe in. Tense your calf muscles.
6. Breathe out. Release the tension in your calves.
7. Work your way up your body. Tense each muscle group. This includes your legs, belly, chest, fingers, arms, shoulders, neck, and face.

**How do I feel after this exercise?**

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# MINDFULNESS & JOURNALING



## What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means choosing to pay attention to the present moment on purpose, without judgement



Concept of '*taking hold of one's mind*', which means concentrating our attention on what we choose rather than having emotions, thoughts, or other experiences control us

Becoming more mindful means we can make more informed and effective choices

## Three Skills

1. NON-JUDGMENTAL
2. ONE-MINDFUL
3. EFFECTIVE IN ABILITY TO SHIFT DIRECTION OF ATTENTION WHEN DISTRACTED

# MINDFULNESS & JOURNALING

## Three Ways to be Mindful

1. Observe
2. Describe
3. Participate



## Mindfulness 5-4-3-2-1

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

-  5 things you see
-  4 things you hear
-  3 things you feel
-  2 things you smell
-  1 thing you taste

This activity helps with grounding because it involves focusing attention on purpose in a non-judgmental way

Also, watch Shauna Shapiro's TED Talk, [The Power of Mindfulness: What You Practice Grows Stronger](#)

How do I feel after this exercise?

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# MINDFULNESS & JOURNALING

“Journaling is  
mindfulness in motion”  
*Lisann Valentin*

## Journaling

Journaling has a range of benefits. Just writing a few minutes a day may help you reduce stress, boost your well-being, and better understand your needs.

Journaling provides a concrete method for learning who we are and identifying what we need.

To create a lasting journaling habit, start with several minutes — or more, depending on your preference. In your journal, you can explore something that’s bothering you, write about the present moment, or play with a prompt.

## Benefits of Journaling

1. helps to reduce stress
2. may boost health and well-being
3. encourages space from negative thoughts
4. provides a way to process emotions
5. can help you figure out your next step
6. deepens self-discovery



# MINDFULNESS & JOURNALING



## 5 Minutes of Journaling

For this activity, choose a time of day to write for **five minutes without stopping**. Use a physical piece of pen and paper to continuously write until your timer goes off. Annie and Tavia journal in the morning to set the tone of their day but you could also journal at night as a time for reflection.

Even taking just five minutes out of your day to journal can help you reduce stress, find inspiration, achieve goals, track progress and growth, strengthen memory, and improve writing and communication skills!

## Inspiration For What to Write About



What you are grateful for

Your passions

Self-reflection

Conflict or stressful situation

Your To-Do List for the day

Your accomplishments

5-4-3-2-1 mindfulness activity

Those you love

Good memories

Goals or aspirations

Why you deserve love

A problem you would like to solve

How do I feel after this exercise?

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# MOVEMENT



From your **brain** to your **joints**, moving every day has the power to improve every part of your body. And it's not just about high-impact, sweat-inducing exercise, either. It's simple – whether you choose to implement **small movements** into your routine or try a new activity, increasing your daily mobility can help upgrade your overall health.

## Muscles



By moving, you are strengthening your muscles, which improves stability, balance, and coordination.



## Bones

Movement helps build more durable, denser bones. Bone-building activities like resistance training (weights), weight-bearing exercises (jogging, walking, hiking), and balance training (yoga) can support better bone density.

## Joints



By being aware of how you move, you can increase coordination and balance, be mindful of the positioning of your joints, and relax.



## Brain

Walking 30–40 minutes a day three times per week can help “regrow” the structures of the brain linked to cognitive decline in older adults.

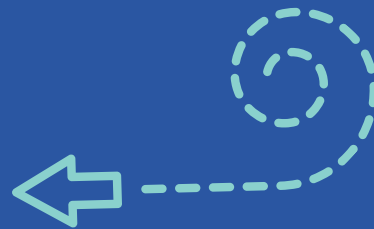
# MOVEMENT



Try at Least One of These Exercises Each Day This Week

- Use a standing desk when possible.
- Set a **reminder** to stand and move at least once per hour.
- Take a **walk** over lunch.
- Walk during phone or conference calls.
- Park far from store entrances, and enjoy your walk to and from.
- Skip the elevator and use the **stairs**.
- Walk around your house when doing routine tasks like brushing your teeth.
- Take your dog for a long walk once daily.
- Walk on a **treadmill** while watching TV.
- Do **yard work**, such as mowing your lawn, raking leaves, or planting flowers.

How do I feel after this exercise?

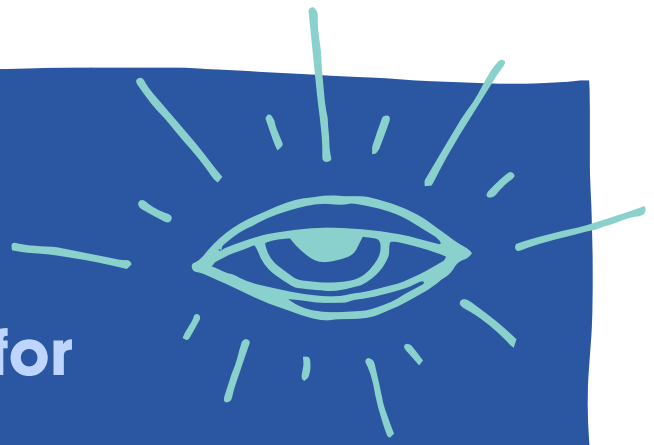


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# BODY SCAN



## Body Scan Meditation for Stress Relief

### Get Comfortable

Lying down is preferable, particularly if you're doing a body scan meditation before going to sleep. If that's not possible or comfortable, sitting comfortably is also an option.

### Take a few deep breaths.

Let your breathing slow down, and start breathing from your belly instead of from your chest, letting your abdomen expand and contract with each breath. If you find your shoulders rising and falling with each breath, focus more on breathing from your belly, as though a balloon is inflating and deflating in your abdomen with each breath

### Bring awareness to your feet.

Now slowly bring your attention down to your feet. Begin observing sensations in your feet. If you notice pain, acknowledge it and any thoughts or emotions that accompany it, and gently breathe through it.

### Breathe into the tension.

tension. If you notice any uncomfortable sensations, focus your attention on them. Breathe into them, and see what happens. Visualize the tension leaving your body through your breath and evaporating into the air. Move on when you feel ready.

### Scan your entire body.

Continue this practice with each area of your body, gradually moving up through your feet until you reach the top of your head. Notice how you feel and where you're holding your stress. If there's any tightness, pain, or pressure, continue to breathe into any tightness, pain, or pressure you're feeling. This can help you release tension in your body now, and be more aware of it in the future so you can release it then, too.

# 2022 CALENDAR

**January**  
**GRATITUDE**

**February**  
**GOAL  
SETTING**

**March**  
**FOOD**

**April**  
**STRESS  
AWARENESS**

**May**  
**PHYSICAL  
FITNESS**

**June**  
**OUTDOORS**

**July**  
**SOCIAL  
WELLNESS**

**August**  
**HAPPINESS**

**September**  
**MEMORY**

**October**  
**EMOTIONAL  
WELLNESS**

**November**  
**ORGANIZATION**

**December**  
**GIVING**

Volunteer Ideas: April is National Volunteer Month, Child Abuse Prevention Month, Minority Health Awareness Month, Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and Stress Awareness Month. Find a way to get involved with a related organization that feels close to you.

Thanks for joining us this month! Follow along for more.

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