

The American Institute of Stress

COMBAT STRESS

BRINGING YOU ALL THE WAY HOME

Volume 2 Number 3
July 2013

HEROS & HOPE

Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center
Warrior Combat Stress Reset Program

WCSR



Fort Hood

TX



The mission of AIS is to improve the health of the community and the world by setting the standard of excellence of stress management in education, research, clinical care and the workplace. Diverse and inclusive, The American Institute of Stress educates medical practitioners, scientists, health care professionals and the public; conducts research; and provides information, training and techniques to prevent human illness related to stress.

AIS provides a diverse and inclusive environment that fosters intellectual discovery, creates and transmits innovative knowledge, improves human health, and provides leadership to the world on stress related topics.

Your source for science-based stress management information

COMBAT STRESS

We value opinions of our readers.

Please feel free to contact us with any comments, suggestions or inquiries.

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Combat Stress is a quarterly newsletter with news and advertising designed with Service Members, veterans and their families in mind. It appeals to all those interested in the myriad and complex interrelationships between combat stress and health because technical jargon is avoided and it is easy to understand. Combat Stress is archived online at stress.org. Information in this publication is carefully compiled to ensure accuracy.

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GET INSIDE OUR HEAD

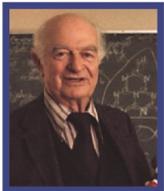


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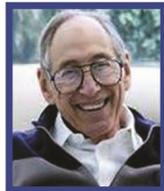
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Join our prominent psychologists, physicians, other health care practitioners and health conscious individuals who are interested in exploring the multitudinous and varied effects of stress on our health and quality of life.

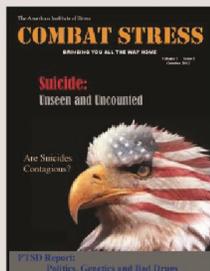
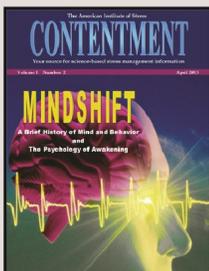
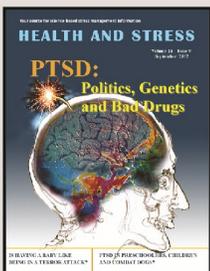
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Our four focus areas include:

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2. Daily Life Stress
3. Workplace Stress
4. Expanding Human Potential

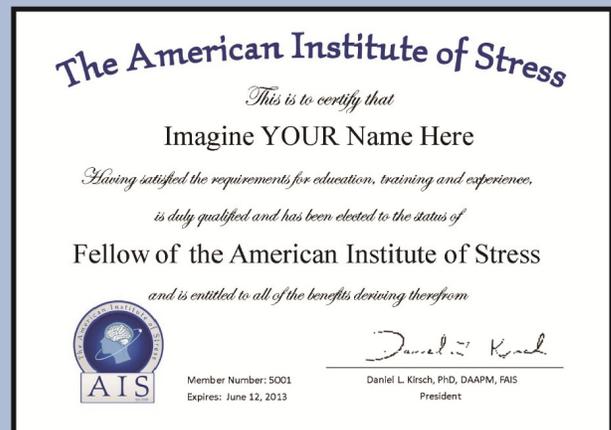
We produce three e-magazines focused on different stress related topics...



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Join us in our mission to
Engage, Educate and Empower
the global community with science based stress management information, tools and techniques so people can live happier, healthier and longer lives!

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WERE YOU INJURED
WHILE ON ACTIVE
DUTY AND NOW
SUFFER FROM
CHRONIC
PAIN?

Sceptor Pain Foundation is proud to announce a multi-center, randomized trial evaluating treatment modalities for soldiers and veterans injured while on active duty and who suffer from chronic pain. The trial will examine the benefits of spinal cord stimulation versus comprehensive medical management.

Enrollment opens in late spring 2011 in select centers across the United States. This is a prospective, randomized trial. To see if you qualify please contact the Center for Clinical Research at 336.714.8389.



Reset The Hook

Warrior Combat Stress Reset Program

WCSR– Reset

by Kellie Marksberry, AIS Executive Director



Dr. Jerry Wesch is a clinical psychologist with forty years experience and has a passion for working with PTSD soldiers, veterans, and their family members. He started his career as a psychologist in the US Air Force, serving four years at the end of the Vietnam War. For the past 4 years he has run the Warrior Combat Stress Reset Program at Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center at Fort Hood, Texas. As Director he leads a team of 15 practitioners who deliver an integrative medicine approach for the effective treatment of active duty soldiers diagnosed with PTSD. The program includes group and individual counseling CES, EMDR, EFT, Neurofeedback, Acupuncture, Massage Therapy, Reiki, Reflexology, Yoga, and Sound Therapy.

Dr. Wesch had a 12 year stint as a research psychologist with the National Institute of Health Multi-Center AIDS Cohort Study. He also developed holistic chronic pain programs at 4 different hospitals during his career and served as Adjunct Professor at two medical schools.

The first steps into the cool, softly lit lobby of the Warrior Combat Stress Reset Program (WCSR), most commonly referred to as "Reset," tells you this place is different. The building is kept very cool as a respite from the blistering Texas heat and the lighting and furnishings are soft and welcoming. Every detail from the building's design to interior décor is purposeful and effective. The Reset program is a unique, multi-modal, integrative model program for the treatment of symptoms of combat stress and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

There is a quiet evolution occurring in the military today. An evolution of more and more physicians and mental health practitioners embracing and incorporating complementary medicine into their treatment protocols and the positive results are staggering. As a result, there is new hope for people suffering from PTSD.

This new hope allows Service Members to find relief without resorting to mind numbing drugs with horrific side effects, but instead teaches new skills that lead them to heal themselves through relaxation inducing, holistic approaches that reset the brain.

The Reset program at Fort Hood is emulated in varying degrees on military bases across the United States. The program is lead by Jerry Wesch, PhD, and has enjoyed high rates of success and boasts years of statistical data to prove it. Over 850 soldiers have graduated from this program and are now empowered with tools and techniques allowing them to sleep, enjoy interacting with their families and continue to be successful soldiers.

Dr. Wesch has recently partnered with the Samueli Institute to conduct a Program Evaluation and comb through years of statistics and reports in an effort to determine the extent to which the goals, objectives and outcomes of the Reset program are being achieved.

Reset is designed for Soldiers who are committed to an intensive and structured program of treatment and whose goal is to further their careers with continued service in the United States Army. It is structured as a three-week intensive program focused on reducing hyper-arousal and reactivity. The combination of multiple treatment interventions from behavioral health, mind/body

treatments, and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) modalities provides opportunity for intense and highly effective treatment. Service Members are expected to attend Reset daily from 0730 to 1630 throughout the three-week period and then must commit to eight weeks of weekly

group therapy after completion of the program.

Reset program components include group and individual counseling, self regulation skills training, biofeedback, coping skills education and training, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy, cranial electrotherapy stimulation (CES) via the Alpha-Stim device, and other integrated CAM modalities (e.g., Acupuncture, Reiki, massage, meditation, yoga, and tai chi).

At AIS, we salute the remarkable achievements and endurance of the individuals at Fort Hood who work every day to change the way soldiers recover from battle and care for their minds and bodies.

Below is an in depth look at the Reset program led by Dr. Jerry Wesch in Fort Hood, Texas.

The main goal of the Reset program is to facilitate recovery from trauma through:

- **Restoring access to "relaxation response" or inner quieting**
- **Improving sleep & self regulation**
- **Facilitating recovery from "triggers" and intrusive memories.**



A man with short blonde hair, wearing a tan t-shirt and a necklace with dog tags, is sitting in a lotus position on a grey mat. He has his eyes closed and a calm expression. The background is a dark, textured wall.

Ready...
Set...

RESET

The following is a breakdown of the modalities the Reset program at Fort Hood utilizes synergistically to help soldiers find their way back to wholeness and health after the trauma of battle. All of the information listed here was collated from the AIS Archives on the various modalities used by Dr. Wesch and his colleagues.

Acupuncture & Acupressure

Needle Away Stress

Modern Western medicine cannot yet explain how acupuncture works. Oriental Medicine is based on ancient Chinese theories of the flow of chi, a bioelectrical force that controls the mind and body. Chi flows through distinct channels that cover the body somewhat like the nerves and blood vessels. According to theory, acupuncture adjusts the flow of chi in the body, leading it to areas where it is insufficient and draining it from areas where it is stuck and/or overabundant.

In this way, acupuncture restores the harmonious balance of the body and its parts. In Chinese, there is a saying, "If there is pain, there is no free flow; if there is free flow, there is no pain." Acupuncture promotes and reestablishes the free flow of chi.

What can it do for you?

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese remedy for curing a host of chronic

ills, from headaches to back pain. Acupuncture involves the insertion of extremely thin needles through your skin at strategic points on your body. A key component of Traditional Chinese Medicine, (TCM) acupuncture is most commonly used to treat pain.

TCM explains acupuncture as a technique for balancing the flow of energy or life force — known as chi or qi (CHEE) — believed to flow through pathways called meridians in your body. By inserting nee-

dles into specific points along these meridians, acupuncture practitioners believe that your energy flow will re-balance, restoring health.



Key Benefits:

- Reduces Stress
- Improves Memory
- Reduces Pain

In contrast, many Western practitioners view the acupuncture points as places to stimulate nerves, muscles and connective tissue. This stimulation appears to boost the activity of your body's natural pain-killers and increase blood flow.

In a study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, researchers led by Andrew Vickers, an epidemiologist and biostatistician at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, report that acupuncture is effective in reducing people's chronic pain— more so than standard pain treatment and slightly better than using sham needles, suggesting that the benefits of real acupuncture are due to something more than the placebo effect. Of Course! After all it has been successfully used for almost 5,000 years.

Yoga

Salute the Sun for Better Days

Ancient scriptures and archeological findings indicate that Yoga has been practiced in various forms for over 5,000 years. It seems doubtful that it would have persisted over this lengthy period of time if it did not provide significant benefits that were not placebo effects.

What can it do for you?

Some of yoga's benefits are undoubtedly due to its ability to facilitate meditation, which has been shown in numerous studies to lower blood pressure. There is little doubt that yoga can be helpful in reducing or preventing many emotional and somatic stress related complaints.

Support for these claims comes from several medical reports. According to Relief

study of women aged 44 to 62 presented at the American College of Sports Medicine's annual meeting showing that yoga increased lower-back flexibility and diminished pain. Researchers from the Yale University School of Medicine found that practicing yoga for an hour and a half three times a week could quickly improve cardiovascular function. They recently reported that 33 men and

women who followed this regimen for just six weeks significantly lowered blood pressure and improved the ability of their blood vessels to expand by 17 percent when subjected to standard challenges. As the lead author of the study explained, "How well the blood vessels dilate is a good indication of how healthy the heart is." He attributes the improve-

Key Benefits:

- Improvement in feelings of anxiety and depression
- Better sleeping habits
- Reduction in the frequency and severity of migraine and tension headaches
- Lower blood pressure and heart rate



is in the Stretch: End Low Back Pain Through Yoga published in 2005, yoga increases the range of motion in your hips, which can reduce low back pain. This was subsequently confirmed in a

ment to the stress-reducing benefits of yoga.

A 2006 publication from the division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School reported that a half-hour to 45 minutes

of daily yoga practice markedly improved the sleeping habits of insomniacs, especially those with high levels of mental and emotional arousal who had difficulty falling asleep. Total sleep time was increased by over 12 percent. An article from the department of psychiatry at New York Medical College found that yogic breathing techniques were effective in alleviating the symptoms of patients with severe anxiety and depression. These benefits were attributed to the stress reduction effects of yoga that lower heart rate and other sympathetic nervous system responses.

Simple yoga and other meditative practices are increasingly being introduced

into elementary schools and kids report that this makes them feel more energized and focused. One teacher commented that it was not only amazing how much they enjoyed it but that he had seen some studies suggesting that it improved attention deficit disorder and lowered drug requirements.

Some of yoga's benefits are undoubtedly due to its ability to facilitate meditation, which has been shown in numerous studies to lower blood pressure. It may be particularly effective in treating hypertension, which is often stress related, and may also help to prevent coronary heart disease.

Give It A Try!

Experience the benefits of waking up to yoga as you stretch your body, awaken your mind, and fuel your spirit. Salute the sun with a smile and gracefully work out all of the kinks and tightness before starting your new day. You'll feel energized, have amazing mental clarity, and will be ready to flow through your day with ease.

Awaken. Bend. Stretch. Breathe. Flow. You'll be glowing all day long.

Download and print this free Rise and Shine Yoga pose guide.

Use the pose guide to follow along as you listen to this free Audio class.

Alpha-Stim®

Cranial Electrotherapy Stimulation

Experience Life Again

"Electrotherapy" has been in use for at least 2000 years, as shown by the clinical literature of the early Roman physician, Scribonius Largus, who wrote in the *Compositiones Medicae* of 46 AD that his patients should stand on a live black Torpedo fish for the relief of a variety of medical conditions, including gout and headaches.

Low intensity electrical stimulation is believed to have originated in the studies of galvanic currents in humans and animals as conducted by Giovanni

Aldini, Alessandro Volta and others in the 18th century. Aldini had experimented with galvanic current to the brain as early as 1794 (upon himself) and reported the successful treatment of patients suffering from melancholia using direct low-intensity currents in 1804.

Cranial Electrotherapy Stimulation (CES) is delivered via a device called Alpha-Stim, and is manufactured by Electromedical Products International, Inc., a 32 year old medical device company located in Mineral Wells, Texas.

What can it do for you?

The Alpha-Stim treats anxiety, depression and insomnia with microcurrent using CES. The treatment is very simple. The current is applied by easy to use clip electrodes that attach on the ear lobes. Used just 20 to 40 minutes every day, every other day, or on an as-needed basis, it can help in-

duce a pleasant, relaxed feeling of well being. Unlike drugs, the Alpha-Stim AID leaves the mind alert. Anxiety reduction is usually experienced during treatment. Depression and insomnia control

is generally experienced after one to two weeks of daily treatment. CES can also help treat the underlying mood disorders associated with pain.

Alpha-Stim CES is ideal for military personnel: it leaves the user

Key Benefits:

- Improves Sleep
- Relieves Anxiety
- Relieves Depression



To use Alpha-Stim:

1. wet and attach ear clip electrodes
2. set timer
3. set current

alert while inducing a relaxed state of body and mind, often referred to as the Alpha State. The effect differs from pharmaceutical treatment, in that there are no untoward side effects that would impair performance. Most people report the experience of feeling that their bodies are

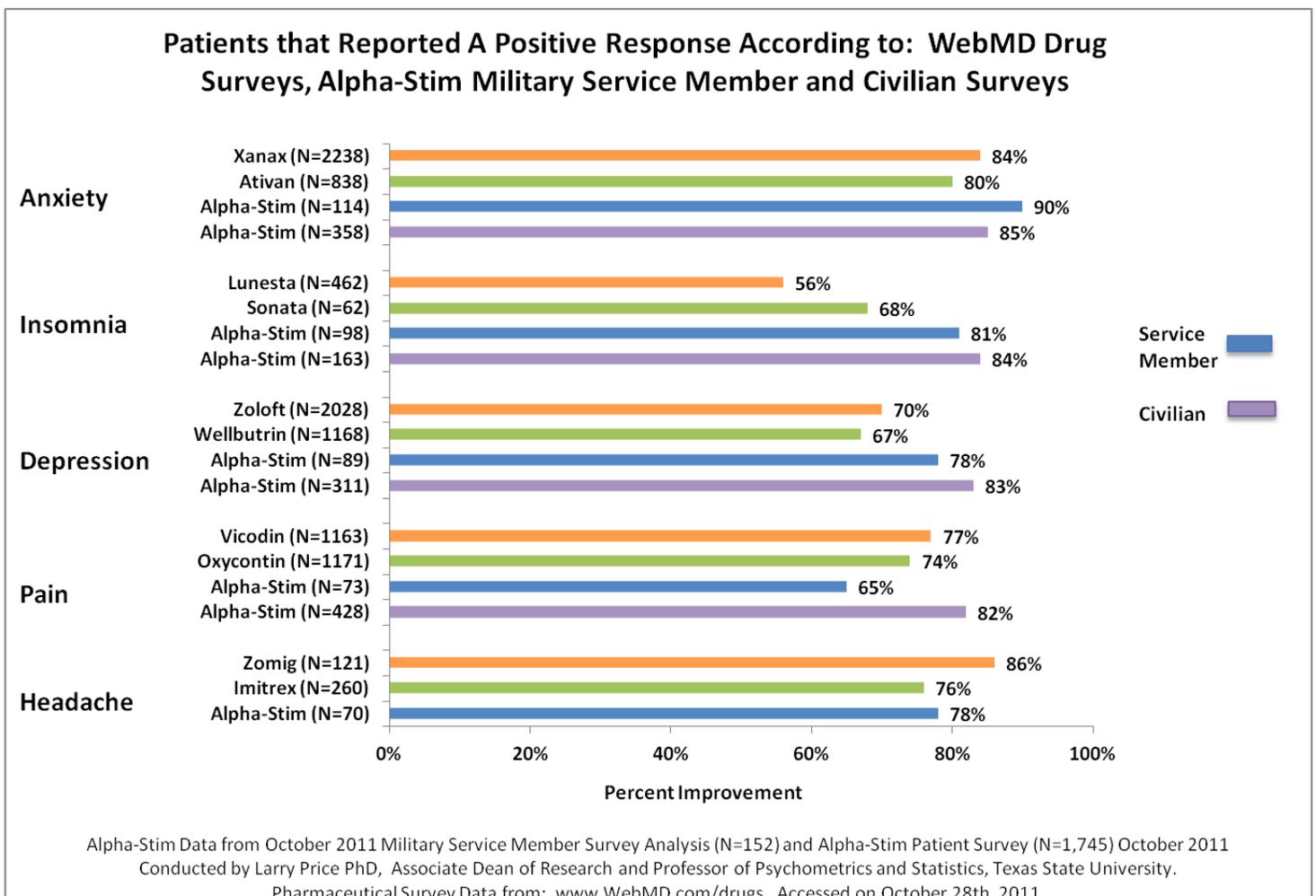
lighter, while thinking is clearer and more creative. Following a CES treatment, people report just feeling better overall. They are less distressed and more focused on mental tasks. They generally report sleeping more productively, having improved concentration, and also having increased learning capabilities. Cranial electrotherapy stimulation users are more resilient to stressful situations by virtue of the confidence that comes from knowing there is always help at hand.

Preliminary studies show that the symptoms of PTSD are reduced with each treatment and that, over time, the improvement becomes more stable so the service member is not as affected by the multitude of minor stressors to which one might be exposed in the course of daily living. Once the PTSD symptoms subside, the treatment may be

continued on a once or twice weekly schedule, or whenever needed, and for as long as necessary.

The effects of CES are powerful but subtle. Most people can resume normal activities immediately after treatment.

Alpha-Stim is in use in many programs throughout the DOD for PTSD, anxiety, insomnia, depression, substance abuse, and pain management. Alpha-Stim CES devices have also been ordered by over 80 VA medical centers over the past decade, and prescribed by more than 200 DOD practitioners. The Army and other government agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Cancer Institute, have invested millions of dollars to study Alpha-Stim CES.



Massage

The Magic of Touch

Massage is probably one of the oldest and most effective stress reduction techniques. Evidence from ancient illustrations and folklore references indicate that massage was practiced in some structured fashion more than 5000 years ago, both in the Orient and Mesopotamia. Acupressure, or *tien'an* was an integral part of ancient Chinese medicine, and was used like acupuncture to improve the flow of chi energy through the body. Our oldest written records date back to 500 BC, when a form of finger and knuckle pressure known as *shiatsu* was popular during the yellow Emperor's dynasty. Around the same time, Hippocrates, often referred to as "The Father of Medicine" wrote that the best way to relieve tension and promote health was "a scented bath and an oiled massage every day."

What can it do for you?

The musculoskeletal system is the only system in the body over which we have direct control. Skeletal muscles are referred to as voluntary muscles, because they allow us to control such activities as walking, chewing and lifting. There are over 1000 skeletal, or striated muscles in the body, that latter term referring to the fact that under the microscope, they have *striae* or



Key Benefits:

- Reduce muscle tension
- Improves immunity
- Improve cardiovascular function
- Reduction of pain
- Improved range of motion

stripes. Non-striated, or smooth muscles, which are found in the walls of blood vessels and the gastrointestinal tract, are generally considered as not being under our conscious control. Their activity is regulated by the autonomic or involuntary nervous system. However, they are stimulated to contract when there is a significant increase in skeletal muscle tension, This would obviously result in an increase in blood pressure and gastrointestinal activity.

It seems reasonable to assume that relaxation of skeletal muscles might have the reverse effect and favor the restoration of normal cardiovascular and gastrointestinal function.

As noted, significant skeletal muscle relaxation is accompanied by a corresponding degree of mental relaxation, which would also help. Stress stimulates the nervous system activities and the release of hormones that cause smooth muscle to contract, and muscle relaxation could help to prevent this. Thus, massage induced muscle relaxation could help to reduce increased blood pressure or gastrointestinal spasm and motility problems by multiple mechanisms.

Meditation

Free Your Mind

Meditation has been shown to produce EEG changes consistent with a state of deep relaxation and possibly increased creativity.

It has also been reported that in addition to improving brain function, there are also beneficial physical changes in the cerebral cortex.

What can it do for you?

Stress is associated with an increase in sympathetic nervous system activity that increases heart rate and blood pressure. Meditation blocks this primarily because its associated regular respiratory pattern stimulates parasympathetic responses that blunt potentially harmful cardiovascular effects. There is some suggestion that experiencing feelings of love and appreciation that are often engendered during deep meditation may potentiate these restorative responses.

Meditation can protect your brain, as assessed by cutting edge technologies like functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), which measures the blood flow in different parts of the brain and shows how active they are. Emory researchers had previously reported that longtime meditators don't show the usual loss of gray matter in their brains as they

age. Other studies have found that meditators have thicker tissues in the prefrontal cortex, the region that governs attention

and control, suggesting a neuroprotective effect. This experiment involved 12 seasoned meditators, including several monks, who practiced Zen meditation daily for at least 3 years and 12 controls who had never mediated. They were asked to follow their breathing while looking at a screen on which actual words or meaningless combinations of letters that looked like words were flashed at irregular intervals. Participants had to decide whether they were seeing a real or fake word and signal by pressing a button before returning to focus on their breathing.

Zen (zazen) practitioners are taught to notice when the mind starts to wander and to quickly return to a meditative state by focusing on their breathing. It is not surprising therefore that the meditators were able to recover from this distraction much more rapidly than controls and

fMRIs confirmed this, as well as a greater volume of grey matter, especially in the putamen, a brain structure linked to attention.



Key Benefits:

- Protects the brain from the effects of aging
- Aids deep relaxation

Give It A Try!

BioFeedback

Gain Greater Awareness

Biofeedback is a technique you can use to learn to control your body's functions, such as your heart rate. Biofeedback is the process of gaining greater awareness of many physiological functions primarily using instruments that provide information on the activity of those same systems, with a goal of being able to manipulate them at will. With biofeedback, you're connected to electrical sensors that help you receive information (feedback) about your body (bio). This feedback helps you focus on making subtle changes in your body, such as relaxing certain muscles, to achieve the results you want, such as reducing pain or stress. In essence, biofeedback gives you the power to use your thoughts to control your body, often to help with a health condition or physical performance.

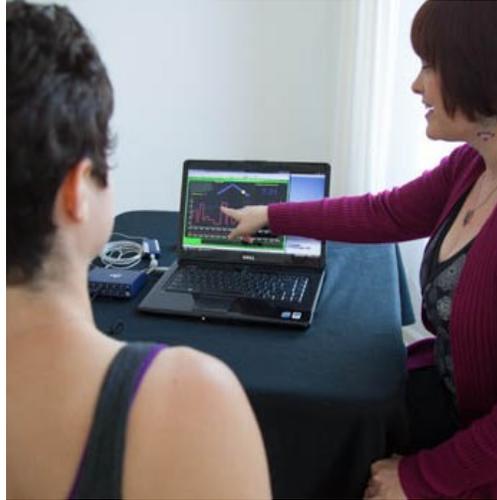
What can it do for you?

Biofeedback is a treatment technique in which people are trained to improve their health by using signals from their own bodies. It can help you to become aware of early signs of pain, tension, anxiety, or other discomfort, so you can manage them. Biofeedback may be used to improve health, performance, and the physiological changes which often occur in conjunction with changes to thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Eventually, these changes may be maintained without the use of equipment, even though no equipment is necessarily required to practice biofeedback.

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Biofeedback works by using non-invasive sensors that are attached to the skin. During biofeedback training the client will either see or hear signals that indicate



changes in the body. The process uses a computer to find the smallest changes in muscle tension, hand temperature, sweat gland activity, heart rate, or respiration. It translates that information into changes in a series of lights, musical tones, numbers or graphics on a computer screen. Awareness of tension and relaxation reverse the stress response. This teaches you how to relax deeply and quickly, which is the main goal of biofeedback. The therapist helps the trainee to modify these signals or "feedback" and, ultimately, change old stress habits.

The length of time necessary for the person to become free of symptoms varies according to two

things: the symptoms they have and how often they practice. Daily practice of 20 minutes is necessary to experience the greatest benefits of biofeedback. Most progress is made when appointments are scheduled at least once a week for the first three to five weeks. As positive changes are made, appointments can change to once every two weeks. Some people complete therapy within five to seven sessions, while others may require 20 or more sessions

Key Benefits:

- Reduce Anxiety
- Reduce Chronic Pain
- Promotes Better Sleep
- Reduce High blood Pressure
- Effective in Treatment of Headaches and Migraines

Tai Chi/Qigong

Breathe Easy

Tai Chi (CHEE) is a system of movements and positions believed to have originated in 12th century China and later developed into a form of martial art. The modern practice referred to in this article often includes sequences of slow movements coordinated with deep breathing and concentration that has been described as "moving meditation."

What can it do for you?

Tai Chi also improves cardiovascular fitness since its low impact movements surprisingly burn more calories than surfing and nearly as many as downhill skiing. Additional benefits include reducing anxiety and depression, symptoms of Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder in children and boosting immune system function.

Qigong also originated in China as a martial art over 3,000 years ago but is now used mainly to promote health and for other medical purposes. Chi or Qi means breath or gas and in Mandarin Chinese, this refers to the energy produced by

breathing that sustains life. Gong means work or technique so that Qigong is "breath work" or the art of managing breath and cultivating energy to achieve good health, much like pranayama in Yoga. There are over three thousand types of Qigong practices that can be classified as being primarily internal or external.

Internal Qigong uses breathing control, movement and meditation whereas external Qigong (also known as Chi emission) is performed by a master by placing his hands on a patient to project Qi energy for the purpose of healing.

(This is somewhat related to Kung Fu, a martial art famous for demonstrations of practitioners breaking boards with bare hands.) Qigong treatment has been officially recognized as a standard medical technique in Chinese hospitals for decades and is now included in the curriculum of major medical schools and universities, some of which issue a bachelor's and master's degree in Qigong therapy.

Key Benefits:

- Reduce Anxiety and Depression
- Boost Immune Function

Give It A Try!

[AIS Diplomat David Sollars](#) has shared this Tai Chi ball exercise, and Qigong exercise so that you can take a few minutes right now to drop stress and focus your mind.





KUDOS

Stress Is Gone

Wallet Card



Order your card today at: www.stressisgone.com

Assess your stress with the biofeedback square. Then turn the card over to stop your stress reaction using steps 1, 2, and 3. For best results practice each night for 5 minutes when you go to sleep and again in the morning. Apply this technique every time you become stressed. With consistent practice the technique assimilates with your body, giving you the control to melt away stress in minutes. Keep one card in your wallet and one near the bed. Share your cards with friends and loved ones.

"This card provides a simple yet scientifically based way to bring awareness and take the first steps to reducing stress by offering the three main components we look at in validating a stress reduction program:

- 1. Bring awareness to your stress level*
- 2. Take physical measures to reduce the stress, in this case focus on the tension and breathe deeply*
- 3. Reinforce the actions with positive imagery*

We like the simplicity of this card. At AIS, our goal is to lead people to mindfulness and teach simple, yet science-based techniques to manage stress. This card checks all the boxes!"

Daniel L. Kirsch, PhD, DAAPM, FAIS President of The American Institute of Stress

Look for **The Seal.**



**ONLY THE AIS
SEAL OF CERTIFICATION**
assures you that a stress
management products or
services have been fully
tested and verified to be
effective by AIS.

What is AIS Certification?

Products and services that have been certified by AIS make truly significant strides toward providing the public with tools, training and techniques that reduce stress levels and improve the health and quality of life for consumers. The AIS seal indicates that this entity delivers on its claims as a stress management tool or training source.

Why Trust AIS?

The American Institute of Stress (AIS) is a non-profit organization that for over 35 years has set quality standards for stress research, and more recently stress management products and services. AIS Standards are recognized across the world as scientifically rigorous and are representative of excellence in the field.

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