



Full Potential
Physical Therapy

Health & Fitness
NEWSLETTER

MAY 2021

RELAXATION AND ITS

RELATION TO HEALING

INSIDE:

- ✓ *Relaxation And Its Relation To Healing*
- ✓ *Creating A Relaxation Response*
- ✓ *Patient Success Story*



MAY 2021

RELAXATION AND ITS RELATION TO HEALING



Whether we are aware of it or not, our bodies are in a perpetual mode of healing. Our immune system is designed to recognize tissues that are not optimal or inflamed and address those deficiencies by directing specialized healing cells to the area of need. For example, you go out and rake the yard for 4 hours and put some stress on your shoulders and back. Your body recognizes this need and sends in the healing team to bring your tissues back to a good status.

There are many complexities to post-activity recovery which relate to age, physical condition, rest, nutrition, hydration and even ergonomics or how we do an activity that impacts our recovery from physical stress. Some people seem to be more prone to a strong inflammation/pain response to being active compared to normal and they walk the line to how much can they do before the body rebels against them. They are often labeled fibromyalgic or have the vague diagnosis of chronic fatigue syndrome.

As mentioned earlier, our body is always attempting to repair and heal itself and the better we do this as a natural mode of living the more we can navigate the demands we put on our body.

Certainly having a healthy lifestyle is a big factor in holding the balance between tissue breakdown and health. And, as if life was not already complicated enough with stress, Covid and its related effects in our world, has placed increased demands on our immune system to heal our bodies on a day-to-day basis. Emotions related to fear, anger, sadness, frustration and loneliness place an additional load on a potentially already stressed immune system.

In response, we are advised to use supplements, have a good diet, drink more water and exercise. All very valid recommendations, but there is one area that is often ignored and, in my mind, fundamental to health and actually to taking full advantage of any health-promoting actions we may do. How our body takes advantage of a healthy diet, supplements and the like is highly related to how our autonomic nervous system is balanced between the flight or fight or technically named, the sympathetic nervous system, and our parasympathetic nervous system or calm state/relaxation response system.

The balance point between these two powerful systems hold a heavy influence on how our bodies recover from physical, emotional and life stress demands.

The flight/fight or sympathetic system is a necessary response in the body to help deal with the sudden need to react to an emergency or threat. It helps us jump into action in an instant and handle what is at hand. Yet, in our current environment and actually for quite a long time now, our sympathetic system has been overstimulated as a lifestyle. Stress from every direction possible is hitting people head on and pushing our bodies to respond as if we are in a persistent level of threat. Stress from relationships, economic demands, work, terrorism (which was heavy after 9/11), poor diet, and now the fear of Covid and the media's hyper focus on it and all the related factors are forcing the body to feel under perpetual sympathetic stimulation.

When the body's autonomic nervous system is under perpetual sympathetic demand, it interferes with the immune system's routine discover and repair cycle and so we do not heal as readily.

(continued inside)

RELAXATION AND ITS RELATION TO HEALING



Illness can be a frequent consequence. Not only that, but we do not digest food as well and our body's ability to take advantage of supplements is less efficient. Then, there is the matter of sleep, we tend to have more complications with getting a full night of rest full sleep. As well, if you are trying to recover from a surgery or injury, the body is not in the most efficient mode for healing. The bottom line is, the body is meant to live in the more parasympathetic or calm state aspect of the autonomic nervous system, when it does all the above systems work more efficiently, we heal, digest and sleep more naturally. The body is in a better state of homeostasis or balance and so can access deep rest and calm and as well, jump into action at a moment's notice.

In addition, those who live in chronic flight or fight state can fatigue their adrenal gland to the point that its ability to work as intended is hindered and people have numerous problems with fatigue and enhanced pain. It is like they are living on high idle and this contributes to other issues with high blood pressure, cardiac arrhythmias, breathing difficulties, panic or anxiety attacks. In essence, violating the most basic system in the body, the one that actually keeps us alive, cannot go on for years without some serious consequences. Doctors are at a loss of how to help these people outside of medication to control the autonomic nervous system which should be under the control of the individual if they were more educated. So, people end up on anti-anxiety, anti-depressants, anti-acids, anti-inflammation, anti-cholesterol drugs, etc., etc. Get the picture?

Medication can be very helpful but what if there could be a complementary approach with no side effects that actually helps put the autonomic system back into balance with the overstimulated flight/fight system and its equally important parasympathetic or calm state system?

There was a time when a local cardiologist would send us patients whose cardiac-like symptoms were ruled out and the diagnosis was stress-related chest pain and/or breathing disorder. We would teach the patient about the above information and as well, how to create a relaxation response in the body. People would return after a period of practice with quite a look of astonishment on their faces as they came to master the simple but effective technique for promoting body relaxation or parasympathetic nervous system dominance.

Not only that but we do not digest our food as well when stressed, our diaphragm gets tight and we have GERD or reflux. I recently had a patient who had reflux and it improved with correcting her breathing and creating diaphragm muscle relaxation which was an incidental response but a welcome one for here.

We approach the art of relaxation by using a breathing technique since it is the most functional method which can be then used in all variety of situations people find themselves. As an example, Joe has to give a speech and can feel the pre-stage stress but he knows how to breath to calm himself and avoid hyperventilation and nails his talk. Mary has to confront her boss about a problem and is able to control her stress and communicate properly. Trudy can use the technique before bed and gets a great night's sleep and Lucy uses this technique to help with her chronic pain. William can use it to settle his pre-test jitters and so pass the test.

The technique is as useful as it is used and integrates well the stressful demands of our lifestyle.

There is so much challenge in our world today that triggers a negative emotional response in us along with the negative effect on our autonomic nervous system. Understanding how to regulate this system can provide the control to navigate the minefield of stress triggers out there so we can be at the helm of our life and in control.

I call it the technique for the new millennium and have taught it often to all who are interested in having internal control.

It is simple as it should be and so effective people have told me things about how life has changed for them that I would have never suspected.

I have put a copy of the technique in this newsletter. Try it for a few weeks for 15 minutes, see if life does not feel different. Then write me a note about your experience – vince@fullpotentialpt.com. If you want more information about the relaxation response, see the book "The Relaxation Response" by Herbert Benson, MD and check my blog on our website for further insights about what to look for as one explores this road that can become an ongoing journey into self-understanding.

To a good night's sleep and so much more,

Vincent Hanneken, PT

Has your pain come back? We can help! Call us at 616-392-2172 to book your appointment today!

We Make It Easy To Leave A Review!

If Full Potential has had a positive impact on your life, leave us a review! It's easy- just follow these steps, and help others know where to get the help they need!

1. Use the camera app on your phone to scan the QR code on the right.
2. This will take you directly to our Google Reviews page.
3. Let us know how we did and tell us your story!



Full Potential
PHYSICAL THERAPY

286 Hoover Blvd • Holland, MI 49423
Phone: 616.392.2172 | Fax: 616.392.1726
tessa@fullpotentialpt.com | fullpotentialpt.com

Your Name

Our New Patient's Name!

Date Of Referral

*Don't miss this opportunity to help your friends and family!
They will thank you, and we will too.*

PLAY THE REFERRAL GAME!

At Full Potential, we know that a referral from our patients is the biggest compliment.

Let us thank you with these 3 simple steps!

1. Write your name on this coupon.
2. Give this coupon to family and friends!
3. Be sure they bring this coupon to their first appointment.
4. Receive a Meijer gift card to those that refer us to a patient!

CREATING A RELAXATION RESPONSE



1. Sit in a comfortable chair where you can lay back (lazy boy position)
2. Make sure you will be warm or comfortable with the temperature of the room and that your neck is comfortable.
3. Place your hands on your stomach
4. Close your mouth if open
5. Just spend a few minutes observing how you are breathing. Notice the size and rate of your breathing, the movement of air through your nose, where your air goes in your chest or stomach. The action of observing without doing anything, just noticing, is quite calming. It seems to give us some space and the stresses of life move out away from us.
6. Now gently inhale through your nose.
7. Try to inhale so easily that all you feel is your stomach rise slightly but give yourself enough air to feel comfortable.
8. Exhale through your nose without trying, just allow the air to leave with the least effort. Your attention is staying on the process.
9. Inhale without trying very hard using your nose again and feel your stomach rise slightly.
10. Repeat over and over as slowly as you are comfortable.
11. Keep your mind only on the breathing.
12. Your mind may tend to wander, when you notice this happening just return to your breathing
13. Keep it light and easy.
14. Spend 10-20 minutes doing this and attempt to stay awake with your mind focused only on breathing.
15. Keep your mind from going to your personal dramas, stay with the subtle breathing motion – nose to stomach and stomach to nose. Inhale lightly, exhale lightly.

How do you know you're doing it right? Easy – you should just feel calmer and more still. Remember, you are doing something that is natural to your physiology, so as you do it, it becomes easier. Enjoy.

Sounds too simple? Well, just give it a try. It is a process that you will grow to like and appreciate. It counters the rampant stimulation of your fight/flight response within your autonomic nervous systems.

Combine the relaxation response with a non-stressful exercise program like walking or swimming.

For more information on this subject refer to The Relaxation Response by Herbert Benson, MD. It will open your eyes to the amazing benefits available to those who know how to slow down their nervous system.

Healthy Recipe

CHICKEN QUESADILLAS



INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp low sodium chicken broth
- 1/4 cup onion, chopped
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 1/4 cup bell pepper, chopped
- 2 chili peppers, minced (to taste)
- 3 plum tomatoes, chopped

DIRECTIONS

In a medium-heavy skillet, saute the onions, garlic and peppers until soft in the 2 tablespoons chicken broth. Add the chili peppers and tomatoes and simmer for a few minutes more until the liquid has evaporated. Add the chicken and stir well to combine. Spray a cold skillet with the nonstick spray and heat over medium heat. Place a tortilla in the pan and sprinkle with 1/8 cup cheese. Add about a quarter of the chicken mixture and top with another 1/8 cup cheese. Cover with another tortilla and cook for two to three minutes or until golden brown. Flip the quesadilla over and cook for an additional two minutes. Remove from the heat and cut into wedges. Keep warm while frying the remaining quesadillas. Serve with salsa, scallions, and fat-free sour cream.

- 8 flour tortillas
- 1 cup low-fat cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 1/2 cups cooked chicken, shredded
- scallion, cut on the bias (garnish)
- salsa (garnish)
- nonfat sour cream (garnish)

EXERCISE ESSENTIALS

Helps to relieve back pain

Side-lying Trunk Rotation

While lying on your side with your arms outstretched in front of your body, slowly twist your upper body to the side and rotate your spine. Your arms and head should also be rotating along with the spine as shown. Follow your hand with your eyes. Hold for 20 seconds repeat 3 times on each side.



Exercises copyright of
 SimpleSet Pro
www.simpleset.net

PATIENT SUCCESS STORY



“My confidence in being able to perform all varieties of tasks at home is higher!”

“In addition to my take home exercises, my confidence in being able to perform all varieties of tasks at home is higher. My PT listened carefully to my concerns and questions, then provided information that helped me understand that minor soreness and pain are ok. Everything is well run, staff are friendly, professional, and make therapy enjoyable! I cannot say enough to thank you for making me feel more confident about doing outdoor/heavy work at home.”

— Kathy B.