

Innovations in Stress Relief

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Brilliant innovations in stress relief are either here or on the horizon. Those who suffer from stress are better able than ever to take advantage of some of these innovations that can keep the onslaught of stress from destroying their health, relationships, jobs and emotional well-being.

Bilateral Alternating Stimulation, biofeedback devices and guided stress relief applications are just a few of the ways technology and years of study have led to this day and moment.

Now, anyone affected from the pain and devastation that too much stress can bring into a life can shop around for the best treatment plan. You can be assured that you can get help from experts who are highly informed about these fascinating and varied stress relief innovations.

Bilateral Alternating Stimulation

Bilateral alternating stimulation is an innovation in stress relief that's designed to use gentle vibrations to reduce stress and, in particular, to improve sleep patterns and your ability to focus.

The stimuli behind bilateral stimulation can be auditory, tactile or visual and works in a rhythmic pattern from left to right. An example of visual bilateral stimulation would be letting your eyes follow a moving light back and forth from left to right.

EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) therapy is part of the bilateral stimulation therapy and has been found to bring long-term relief to emotional stress such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Bilateral stimulation is achieved in EMDR by activating and then releasing any traumatic emotional experiences that may be causing problems in your nervous system and making you anxious or upset. This release lets your body and mind connection heal itself.

The same theory works with auditory bilateral stimulation, which works by listening to various sounds from the left to right sides of the head. When bilateral stimulation is used for therapy, it changes the way you react to certain memories and stimuli.

For example, the stimulus might be the sound of waves rushing in on the beach while interrupting a bad memory you just can't seem to control. Your nervous system is immediately drawn to the sound (stimulus), preempting the memory.

Over a period of time, this changes the way the memory is stored and eventually causes you to stop responding to – or remembering – the bad memory. A good example of a product that promotes bilateral stimulation is called Touchpoints.

Touchpoints are wearable and are available in pairs. You wear them around your wrist and they have three settings – sleep, calm and anger. Obviously, the vibrations move from your left wrist to your right.

This device can be very effective in improving your sleep patterns and cognitive abilities. It's controlled by an easy-to-use downloadable application and uses gentle vibrations that alter the way the brain reacts to stress.

Bilateral stimulation is safe and is even used on autistic children to calm them when outside sensory stimulation triggers hypersensitive reactions.

Biofeedback Devices

You can now purchase all types of stress relief devices that can help you promote your health and emotional well-being. Biofeedback devices can also be purchased to help pinpoint what's causing your stress and what makes you feel relaxed.

The idea behind these types of therapeutic devices is that once you know what is stressing you out, you can avoid those stressors – and move toward more beneficial things or activities.

For example, a biofeedback device called WellBe is a stress therapy bracelet that you wear during the day. It monitors your heart rate and alerts you to times your stress level is increased based on people you're around, location you're in and the time of day.

A downloadable application offers you some biofeedback exercises you can choose from to help you relax. You can choose from meditation, deep breathing, guided imagination and more.

Another device – the Lief Smart Patch – is also a wearable piece that alerts you by vibrating when it detects an increase in heart rate. This signal tells you that you should change your patterns of breathing more like the vibrations you're feeling from the device.

All the information you can gather from these types of devices are excellent methods of knowing when you're in danger of increased stress levels and possible harm to your body.

As soon as you're warned, you can adjust what you're doing and take control of your responses to stress. The information you gather from these devices are sent to an app and you can then analyze the data.

It's valuable information to have with you when or if you visit a doctor and will give him or her valuable insights into how stress is affecting your body. Training your mind and body about how to respond to stress can prevent future health problems.

Experts have used biofeedback to promote relaxation and feelings of calm for a number of years. Studies have shown that when you're experiencing stress, body functions change.

Your heart rate, skin temperature, sweating, muscle movements, blood pressure and breathing rate are affected during stressful moments and biofeedback is the information delivered to a device when stress occurs.

Relaxation techniques you can practice include deep breathing such as in yoga exercises and guided imagery, in which you focus on the color and texture of a particular image.

Mindfulness meditation is also a relaxation technique where you are trained to focus your thoughts on stress and then practice releasing the negative emotions. Progressive muscle relaxation can be used to relax various muscles in the body.

Biofeedback devices are becoming more sophisticated and helpful and you're sure to find a device that fits your needs and that can help you track and relieve stress for the long-term.

Guided Stress Relief Apps

Having too much stress in your life can do a number on your health and the way your mind and emotions function. In fact, too much stress can kill you. That's why it's important to pinpoint where your stress is coming from and do something about it.

There are guided stress relief apps that can help you with your struggle. It's a technology that has spiraled in recent years and the innovations are amazing. These apps have been tested and deemed to be helpful in stopping stress in its tracks.

Most apps available today work with Android and iOS and also have web versions. They're inexpensive and help you deal with stress in various ways. Some may be able to immediately calm you when stress overcomes you.

Other apps can help you meditate or use biofeedback while others simply help you sleep. You can find stress-relief gadgets based on cognitive behavior therapy to work on changing your patterns of thinking and behaving negatively.

A behavior therapy app called Pacifica even tracks your thoughts and helps you set goals. You can get this app on a subscription basis and have an ongoing stream of information.

There is an acupuncture app (Acupressure: Heal Yourself) available that teaches you how to use various acupuncture points on your body to relieve stress. This method of stress relief may also help with addictions and pain relief.

Most of the stress-relief apps are inexpensive and you can cancel your subscription or membership whenever you want without incurring a fee. Some become helpful tools to share with your doctor or therapist so he or she has more information about how stress is affecting you.

If you're dedicated to finding stress busters for yourself, research some of these guided stress relief apps and try a couple. It may take some time and effort to find what's best for you, but when you do, it will be life-changing.

Fisher-Wallace Stimulator

One of the newest and most talked-about innovations in stress relief is the Fisher-Wallace Stimulator – a device that helps treat depression, sleep patterns and mood improvement. It's also used by many substance abuse recovery clinics.

This device was invented by a group of engineers and doctors and uses waveforms to slightly stimulate the brain so that it manufactures more neurochemicals and serotonin that can help sleep patterns and boost moods.

Doctors are also finding that certain types of stimulation help relieve depression, anxiety and pain. This stimulator resembles a headband with wires descending to a box that looks similar to a remote control and runs on batteries.

There are other devices similar to the Fisher-Wallace Stimulator, but this particular one has been approved by the FDA, which is a monumental accomplishment. It takes about 30 days to accurately assess if the device works for you or not.

Researchers and scientists are finding that certain types of stimulation can make a difference in treating patients who are depressed, in pain and having other mental and physical health problems.

There is a deeper type of brain stimulation (DBS) which requires a neurosurgical procedure in which a device (sometimes called a brain pacemaker) which is designed to send electrical impulses to the brain to help with Parkinson's disease, obsessive-compulsive- disorder and other conditions that are resistant to other types of treatments.

Now, researchers are conducting studies to see how stimulating the brain may also be used to treat other disorders without surgery. PTSD, major depression and severe pain are just some of the harmful conditions that electrical stimulation may relieve.

Electrical stimulation devices have been around for awhile, but many had issues with safety and how much stimulation is good for the brain. Now that more research has been done and verified, studies indicate that stimulation can be very effective in helping with many health and emotional issues.

Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation

rTMS (Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation) is a long medical term that translates to a type of brain stimulation that doctors are using to treat anxiety and depression.

This form of treatment has been approved by the FDA and uses a magnet to target certain areas of the brain that have been affected by stress and then stimulates those areas to help them change.

rTMS is sometimes used as an additional type of therapy when other treatments are being used. This may account for the varying reviews that patients have given the therapy.

Some say that the treatments were very effective while others claim it helped very little. Doctors may try antidepressants and psychotherapy

before they resort to trying rTMS – or, they may use it in conjunction with other types of treatments.

A session of rTMS might last a half hour to one full hour and the procedure is non-invasive. It is performed by a medical doctor. The patient will be in a reclined position and the doctor will place an electromagnetic coil near your head.

The doctor will then place the coil on the forehead close to the mood-regulator area of the brain. Magnetic pulses will pass through the coil to the targeted area of the brain in certain nerve cells.

The prefrontal cortex of the brain is usually targeted when the patient is suffering from depression. The electrical current stimulates the brain cells so that depression may be reduced.

rTMS is a preferred treatment for those patients who may have a high risk of tolerating anesthesia used for more complex procedures such as ECT (electroconvulsive therapy).

There is usually no pain involved with rTMS treatments, but some patients do describe it as uncomfortable – a tightening or tingling sensation. Side effects of rTMS might include slight headaches or lightheadedness and for some – temporary hearing difficulties.

Another side effect might be a temporary tingling sensation in the scalp, face or jaw. Cost for the rTMS treatments are fairly expensive, running from \$6,000 to \$12,000 for four- to six-week treatment plans.

If you're interested in trying rTMS treatments, check with your doctor to see if you're a good candidate for the procedure. More studies are in progress now to determine the long-term effects of rTMS and which symptoms respond best to the treatments.



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