

# The Nature of the Course



## Module 1: How Stress Affects the Mind and Body

### Description

Many people with rotten stress management techniques end up needing professional help. In some cases, this cry for help comes for the ravages of acute stress; in other cases, the health professional is seeing the impact of chronic stress.

Chronic stress is a contributing factor to conditions such as hypertension (high blood pressure), ulcers, and atherosclerosis (closing of the arteries, typically around the heart.) While acute stress generates anxiety, worry and is associated nasty emotions such as anger.

The module helps you understand the distress associated with stress.

### Learning Objectives

- Discover the impact of acute and chronic stress on the body.
- Know how stress impacts the normal functioning of the mind.
- Be able to detect the intellectual, emotional, behavioral, contextual and physiological symptoms of stress.
- Know the relationship between stress, illness and immune suppression.
- Understand how increasing stress levels impact work performance.

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## Module 2: Using the Breath To Relax

### Description:

For many, there is a vague understanding that when anxious, one breathes faster and shallower. At extreme levels of stress, some start breathing “like a dog” and will even hyperventilate.

However, the reverse is also true, breathing slowly and deeply relaxes the mind and the body. However, few people understand how to use the breath to relax.

This module will show you how to use the **slow breath** and the **deep breath technique** to relax.

### Learning Objectives:

- Discover the relationship between the breath and feeling anxious or feeling relaxed.
- Experiment with slow breathing to control and reduce stress.
- Practice using the deep breath technique to reduce anxiety.

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## Module 3: Mastering the Fine Art of Progressive Relaxation

### Description:

Beside its impact on the breath, stress affects the voluntary muscles in the body. Muscles so affected spasm (contract) and will not release. If the spasm continues, it produces discomfort. If it strengthens, it generates pain.

Muscle spasms tend to occur more frequently with certain muscle groups. For example, under stress many feel a tightening of the muscles in the lower back, the shoulders or neck area. Others feel tightness in the face, which over the years produce “worry lines.”

Progressive relaxation does not require stretching, simply focusing the mind on relaxing the muscles. It does, however, require that you learn how to use two key mental resources: kinesthetic awareness and attention.

### Learning Objectives:

- Discover how awareness differs from attention.
- Learn how to use progressive relaxation to release tension from the body
- Practice using attention to release stress in muscles.
- Practice using awareness to detect tense muscle groups.

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## Module 4: Learning How to Mediate

### Description:

Meditation has been used for thousands of years in the East, but it is relatively new to the West. Since it is relatively new, most people don't understand its benefits.

Stress is associated with a physiological mechanism known as the "fight or flight" response. Meditation, on the other hand, is associated with the exact opposite mechanism, the relaxation response. So while stress results in anxiety and worry, meditation generates peace and serenity.

This module explains the primary benefits for learning meditation—reduction of stress and anxiety and presents methods to access this state.

### Learning Objectives:

- Understand the physical and psychological benefits associated with the regular practice of meditation.
- Discover the positive aspect of meditation on the mind and body.
- Learn the access steps necessary to enter a meditative state.