

# STRESS REDUCTION WORKSHEET

It's the last thing that someone wants to hear when they are knee deep in IUIs and IVF: Just relax! You know that the person saying it to you is likely well-meaning, but that doesn't quite make your desire to punch them in the face any less intense. Unfortunately, I am here to tell you what you probably know already: It is true.

Try not to curse me out quite yet. The psychological consequences of having issues with fertility are significant and real. Again, tell you something you don't know, right? Just to give you a bit of validation, a study of 200 couples seen consecutively at a fertility clinic found that half of the women and 15% of the men said that infertility was the most upsetting experience of their lives. Another study of 488 women who completed a psychological questionnaire before undergoing a stress reduction program concluded that women with infertility felt as anxious or depressed as those diagnosed with cancer, hypertension or recovering from a heart attack.

The Problem: All that stress and worry not only damages your self-esteem and your relationship with your partner, it wreaks havoc on your body and overall health. This just further perpetuates the cycles that are likely already in place, draining your fertility reserves.

## SOURCES:

1. Emotional
2. Physical (trauma, excessive exercise)
3. Physiological
  - a. GMOs
  - b. Gluten
  - c. Dairy
  - d. Toxins (metals, microbes, food sensitivities)
  - e. Poor sleep, lack of sleep

## STRESS::

- Increases cortisol which then steals the building blocks of reproductive hormones like estrogen, progesterone and testosterone, causing imbalances
  - Menstrual irregularity, poor sperm production, decreased progesterone, depleted testosterone, depleted ovarian reserve
- Feeds inflammation
- Depletes nutrients
- Negatively impacts the gut
- Causes weight gain
- Impacts thyroid hormone levels

So we know it's bad, we hate the way we feel, but how many of us are actually taking steps to reduce stress? My guess, is very few. This MUST be an integral part of your health and

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fertility boosting regimen. This MUST be something you commit to. Remember those mini wins? They play a big part here. Start with something simple. Even making the time to be mindful and take several deep breaths every couple of hours makes a difference. Here are some suggestions for stress reduction. Many of these are scientifically proven to reduce stress. Pick one or two or three and start implementing them. Right now. No excuses. Feel free to share your choice(s) in the private FB group. Are you struggling to stay committed? Reach out and share that too. Are you already noticing an improvement? Let everyone know.

- Go to bed earlier and get up earlier.
- Get more sleep
- Unplug (just say no to devices - put them in device time out)
- Spend time with a pet (no, not picking up dog poop)
- Write (Creatively, journal, blog)
- Art (paint, draw, color)
- Music (listen, play)
- Cook (Only if this is relaxing for you)
- Dance
- Laugh (Go to a comedy club, spend time with your funniest friends)
- Sing
- **Meditation**
- **Yoga**
- Exercise
  - Especially outside (hike, run, jog, walk, meander, shoot hoops, stand up paddle board, road or mountain biking, rock climbing)
- Faith/Spirituality (pray, go to church)
- Practice Mindfulness (live in the present moment)
  - In a study of more than 400 people, participants were asked to count nine breaths in sequence by tapping one computer key per breath and a different key for the final breath in each sequence, an activity that necessitates awareness of the breath. The researchers found a correlation between positive mood and accurate breath counting. (You could find time for this, right?!)
- Spend time with friends (try no to isolate yourself)
- Read
- Take a bath (maybe with some Epsom Salts and essential oils?)
- Get a massage/massage therapy
- See a counselor
- Acupuncture
- Try Tapping
- Essential oils (consider a diffuser)/aromatherapy
- Have a 'No-Strings-Attached' Date (lots of hugging, hand-holding, kissing and sex only for fun and intimacy, not simply to procreate)

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WRITE NOTES IN THE BOX BELOW AS WELL AS THE METHODS YOU ARE GOING TO TRY AND HOW YOU WILL IMPLEMENT THEM

## NOTES

