



FEBRUARY

self-care/self-love

WEEK 2 - SELF-CARE AS IT RELATES TO STRESS MANAGEMENT

- Our endocrine system is wired to respond to stress, like a bear or tiger attacking, by releasing Cortisol. This hormone, that gets such a bad rap, is actually essential for life. We need it, but we don't need it to be high all the time. It should rise in the morning when we rise, peak around mid-day and then slowly fall until evening time. When we are chronically stressed, our cortisol remains high all day. This is an environment that invites dis-ease.
- Our current functional medicine practitioners use this analogy: Chronic stress is to the body like cigarette smoke is to the lungs. That's serious!
- Stress can be physical, emotional or environmental

How to deal with the chronic stress in our lives:

- Meditating, ideally at least three times per week: Research shows regular meditation can decrease anxiety and depression, promote emotional health, lengthen attention span, clear brain fog, reduce age-related memory loss, help combat addiction, improve sleep, control hypertension and generate kindness. Start with an app such as Calm or Headspace.
- Deep breathing: This activity turns on the vagus nerve, which innervates all major organs! How to do it: breathe in through your nose with your tongue pressed to the roof of your mouth, hold for a couple seconds and slowly exhale through your mouth. Your smartwatch will walk you through some deep breaths or try the app Kardia.
- Wake up early: To get time to yourself for that meditation, deep breathing, Bible study, journaling, whatever brings you life. Easing into the morning in a peaceful mindset, rather than rushed and stretched for time, can completely transform how you will react to whatever is thrown your way.
- Take a self-care day: Depending on your particular life circumstances, this may be easy or difficult. Maybe you need to take a sick day from work just to stay home and relax. Maybe this will require calling in the grandparents or setting up a kid swap with friends. Depending on how you feel and what you sense your body needs, this day could involve indulging in some sweet quiet time, trying a new form of exercise, or catching up with friends.

TAKE-AWAYS

- Are you prioritizing self-care?
- Can you get some form of stress reducing self-care on the calendar right now?
- Take a few deep breaths - now.