

Achieve

A Newsletter
for AvMed
Members

▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE

4 mindfulness practices that can ease stress

Stress is no good for your heart. It can raise your blood pressure and increase your risk of a heart attack or stroke. Mindfulness can help when you're feeling stressed. It's a type of meditation where you focus on the present moment. Try these simple mindfulness exercises.

1. Do a body scan

A full body scan lets you focus on your body instead of your thoughts. Sit or lie down and take a deep breath. Starting with your toes and working your way up, check in with each part of your body. Notice any tension or pain that you feel.

2. Practice gratitude

Writing down your thoughts requires being present, which is what mindfulness is all about. Jotting down things that you are grateful for can relieve stress even more. Each morning, grab a pen and list a few things that you're thankful for.

3. Breathe

Taking a few deep breaths can help you feel calmer. Try this: Breathe in for three to five seconds from your belly. Then exhale for three

to five seconds. Continue breathing in this slow and intentional way until you feel calm.

4. Let go of bad thoughts

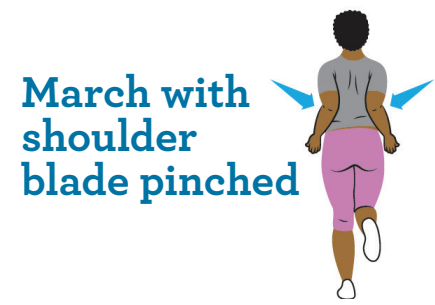
Negative thoughts are bound to happen. Mindfulness can help keep them from ruining your day. When you have a negative thought or worry, pause to acknowledge it. Then visualize the thought floating away like a cloud or a leaf down a stream.



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3 cardio moves to strengthen your heart

Your heart is a muscle. Make it stronger with these total-body cardio moves. Start by doing this routine three days a week, and work your way up to five days. (Consult with your healthcare provider before beginning any new exercise routine.)



March with shoulder blade pinched

1. Stand tall with your feet hip-width apart and elbows bent at the sides as if you're running. Do not swing arms.
2. Slowly march in place, pinching your shoulder blades together as each knee rises to hip height.
3. Release pinch as foot returns to the floor. That's one rep. Do three sets of 10 reps on each side.

Tip: Resist the urge to scrunch your shoulders to your ears. Focus on squeezing the shoulder blades down and back with each pinch.



Chair squat

1. Stand in front of a sturdy chair (facing away from it) with your feet hip-width apart.
2. Push your hips back and bend at the knees to lower your torso until your hips graze the chair.
3. Press through your heels to raise back to standing (allow a slight rest in the chair first, if you need one). That's one rep. Do three sets of 10 reps.

Tip: If you feel knee pain or lose balance, use a taller chair. As you get stronger, you can progress to shorter chairs.



Punch-kick combo

1. Stand with your elbows bent at your sides as if you're running.
2. Transfer all of your body weight to one foot. Simultaneously kick the other foot in front of you to waist height while punching your opposite arm straight forward at shoulder height.
3. Return to start. That's one rep. Do three sets of 10 reps on each side.

Tip: Perform each move with control, going slow. Flinging your limbs can be harmful to your joints and connective tissues.



CARE ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT

Laura Lippert has been with AvMed for 16 years, and a Care Advocate for the last 10 years.

"My favorite thing about being a Care Advocate is the members I am privileged to speak to and assist — and knowing that possibly I might have made someone's life a bit brighter or easier, or perhaps lessened their burden a little."



Healthy Eating Made Simple

Elizabeth Ferrer, R.D., AvMed's Registered Dietitian, shares her favorite tips for happier, healthier meals — without feeling deprived.



What's so great about the Mediterranean diet?

You've no doubt heard of the Mediterranean diet. It's been named the best diet by *U.S. News & World Report* for the past several years. And tons of research back up its health benefits, which include better heart health, less inflammation, weight loss, cancer prevention, and more.

The Mediterranean diet is more of a lifestyle change than a strict "diet" with specific rules to follow. But you don't have to live on

the Mediterranean coast to reap the benefits of this eating style. Adding some of its key principles to your day can help. Here's how:

Add more fruits and vegetables

Plant foods are the base of the Mediterranean diet. The fiber and nutrients from these foods are great for your health. Try to add vegetables to every meal. Swap dessert for fresh fruit. And experiment with meatless meals based on beans and grains instead.

Eat fish and seafood at least twice a week

Seafood has omega-3 fats and minerals that benefit heart and brain health. Instead of chicken or beef, serve fish like tuna, salmon, trout, and sardines.

Use healthy fats from plant foods

Unsaturated fats from plant foods are better for your health than saturated fats from animal foods. Swap butter for oils like olive or canola in your cooking.

Enjoy meals with loved ones

The Mediterranean diet isn't just about the food. Being active and socializing are part of the Mediterranean lifestyle too. Eat meals with family and friends, then take a stroll together after dinner.

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Mediterranean Bean Salad

Recipe



Serves 6
Prep time:
15 minutes

Ingredients

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|---|---|
| ¼ cup olive oil | 1 small red onion, minced |
| 2 tbsp red wine vinegar | 1 medium cucumber, chopped |
| 1 lemon, juiced | 1 cup chopped fresh herbs like mint, parsley, and/or dill |
| 2 tsp garlic powder | ½ cup crumbled feta cheese |
| 2 cans garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained | |
| 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved | |

Directions

In a large bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar, lemon juice, and garlic powder. Add the rest of the ingredients to the bowl and toss to combine.

Nutrition facts (per serving):

Calories 300; Fat 14g (Sat Fat 4g); Cholesterol 10mg; Sodium 360mg; Carbs 26g; Fiber 7g; Sugar 6g (including 0g Added Sugar); Protein 9g; Vit D 2µg; Calcium 130mg; Iron 2mg; Potassium 340mg