



**IN THIS ISSUE**

**Stress Awareness  
Month | Every Body Is  
Subject to Stress**

**Monthly Moves**  
Neck Stretch

**Easy Honey Garlic  
Salmon**





# Wise & Well

Welcome to the new Wise & Well Newsletter, where we promote whole-person well-being each month and highlight health-related topics to help you be your best.



## Categories of Stress

- Acute.** The body's immediate reaction to a new and challenging situation.
- Episodic.** Frequent episodes of acute stress.
- Chronic.** High-stress levels for an extended period of time.

## Every Body Is Subject to Stress

According to the National Institutes of Health, there is no single definition for the word stress. The most common description is physical, mental or emotional strain or tension. However, with April being National Stress Awareness Month, it's a good time to take a deeper look at our sympathetic nervous system.

Stress is something that everyone experiences to varying degrees — it's a natural human reaction that manifests when we face pressure from changes and challenges. Essentially, the part of our nervous system responsible for fight, flight or freeze reactions gets fired up in the presence of stressors. This triggers a number of physiological changes, such as the release

of stress hormones and increased blood pressure. Because everyone reacts to stress differently, with some people being more sensitive to stress than others, there is a wide variety of strategies and techniques to help your body relax after a stressful event.

It's important to note that not all stress is bad. Eustress, for example, is the type of stress that leads to a positive response, like the opposite of distress. It's moderate or normal psychological stress that has a beneficial effect on things like health, motivation, performance or emotional well-being. This type of stress is usually experienced for a short period of time

and can feel really good or exciting. Imagine what you might experience on a blind date, riding a mountain bike down a steep dirt hill or adapting to a new culture in a foreign land. It's the kind of stress that lets us know we're alive, boosts energy and helps keep us working toward success and achievement.

Distress, on the other hand, is stress which can lead to feelings of anxiety or fear. This kind of stress can leave you feeling worn out, depressed or overwhelmed. Some examples of negative stressors that affect us all are relationship difficulties, short-term financial setbacks, or maybe it's the busiest time of the year at your workplace, and you're putting in extra hours. These

short-term or acute stress examples are just a handful of life's fundamental challenges. When we experience this kind of stress too regularly or frequently, that's when episodic stress occurs. Unfortunately, this is the point for many of us when stress puts our health at risk.

Chronic stress occurs when your body's alarm bells have been ringing for some time. For example, when relationships go from being difficult to toxic, when short-term financial setbacks become entirely unmanageable or when the busiest time of the year at work never seems to end, you're likely experiencing chronic stress. Yale describes it as a consistent sense of feeling



Continued **Every Body Is Subject to Stress**

pressured and overwhelmed over a long period of time. Stress of this magnitude can trigger emotional symptoms like depression, anger or hopelessness. It can also lead to unhealthy coping behaviors involving drugs or alcohol. In addition, it is at this point that some of the psychological distress can spill over into the physical realm in the form of aches or pains, insomnia or headaches.

Generally speaking, anyone experiencing stress that lasts for weeks or months and feels incapable of changing their situation should reach out to their doctor. For the majority of us that haven't quite reached that point, we can undertake many stress-relieving activities. Some of them are easier than others, but by focusing on making better choices and taking steps to improve our lifestyle, we put ourselves in a position to reduce our stress and maintain our health.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), one of the ways we can address chronic stress is by setting limits. This could be as simple as making a list of your projects and commitments and cutting back on anything that is not essential to survival. Dipping into your support system by reaching out to

a friend or family member and letting them know you're having a rough go is another step towards taking better care of yourself when the stress starts piling up. Striving for 7-8 hours of solid sleep each night, cutting back on caffeine, or committing to an aerobic activity will yield positive dividends in the quest for stress management. Even looking at things through a positive lens helps keep life's challenges in perspective.

Determining your stress level is an entirely subjective exercise. What may be stressful for you may seem normal to someone else. Regardless, all of us are subject to the fight or flight response that characterizes stress. Being attentive to its intensity and length and knowing how to respond appropriately is critical to managing it. If you've been experiencing long-term stress, it is imperative that you sleep, eat well, exercise in moderation and focus on activities that help you feel relaxed. If you have yet to discover what works for you in this regard, perhaps spending this month of April focusing on what is causing you stress and how you're coping with it may be a tremendous investment of your time and energy.

Source: [apa.org](https://www.apa.org)

# Monthly Moves

## Neck Stretch

Preventing stress-related neck and shoulder tension isn't always easy to do. But, there are techniques and strategies that may help relieve muscle tension and ease pain and discomfort. This neck stretch is a deep stretch that eases tension in your neck and helps improve your range of motion. It can be done in virtually any environment and is a good way to ease some tension throughout the course of your day.

01 Stand tall with your left arm at your side.

03 Gently pull your head toward the right side until you feel a stretch in the left side of your neck.

02 Place your right hand on your head with your fingers pointing to the left side.

04 Hold for 20 to 30 seconds and return to center. Do two to three times on each side.

Tap [here](#) for a video demo.

Source: [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com)







# Easy Honey Garlic Salmon

When you're feeling stressed, making a meal might not feel high on your to-do list. But outside of the fact that cooking can help you de-stress, there are tons of recipes that reduce stress levels with well-proven relaxation benefits.

One of which is this Easy Honey Garlic Salmon. As the name implies, all you need is salmon, garlic, honey, olive oil and soy sauce to make this simple honey-garlic salmon dish. Omega-3s are an excellent nutrient for minimizing stress and maximizing brain power, and salmon is chock full of it. Choose wild over farmed for the best omega-3 levels, as farmed fish requires a larger portion, with more fat, to get the same amounts of omega-3 as is available in the wild version. That hint of sweetness from honey is good for your brain, too.

## Ingredients

- 4 salmon fillets, approximately 4 ounces each
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 clove of garlic finely minced
- Salt and pepper to taste

## Directions

1. Heat the olive oil over medium-high heat in a large pan. Season the fillets generously with salt and pepper.
2. Place the fillets, flesh side down, into the pan. Cook for 5 – 6 minutes or until deep golden brown.
3. Flip the fillets and cook on the other side for 4 – 5 minutes more or until the fish is cooked through and easily flakes with a fork.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, honey and garlic.
5. Drizzle the soy sauce mixture over the salmon and serve.

Source: [healthyfitnessmeals.com](https://healthyfitnessmeals.com)