

# Wellness Daily News!

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## Helping Others May Help You Live Longer and Happier



We've heard a lot about the more traditional components of wellness—**Physical Wellness** (creating healthy lifestyle modifications), **Emotional Wellness** (being aware of your feelings and having an optimistic approach to life) and **Financial Wellness** (feeling secure in your financial future). But one aspect of total well-being that often gets overlooked is **Social Wellness**. Social Wellness is defined as volunteerism; involvement in the community and your level of personal support and relationships.

Sure, we know that doing charitable work make us feel good, but a new review of the health effects of volunteering found that helping others on a regular basis—like serving food in a soup kitchen or reading to the blind—can reduce early mortality rates by 22%. Social Wellness might be the hot ticket to living a longer and healthier life!



For more information, please visit our website:

<http://walshins.com/Resources/Wellness>

## Benefits of Volunteering

- ◇ **Connects you to others.** Children watch everything you do. By giving back to the community, you show them firsthand how volunteering makes a difference and how good it feels to help others. It's also a valuable way for you to get to know organizations in the community and find resources and activities for your children and family.
- ◇ **Brings fun and fulfillment to your life.** Volunteering can be a relaxing and energizing escape from your day-to-day routine of work, school, or family commitments. Volunteering also provides you with renewed creativity, motivation, and vision that can carry over into your personal and professional life.
- ◇ **It's good for your body and mind.** Volunteering helps counteract the effects of stress, anger, and anxiety. The social contact aspect of helping and working with others can have a profound effect on your overall psychological well-being.



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## Feeling Stressed?

Everyone has some type of stress in their lives. We can experience “good” stress (also called eustress), which is short-term and can propel you forward and help you achieve more goals, ultimately leading to more happiness, success, or fulfillment. Events that could contribute to eustress include; starting a new job, giving a speech, or having a baby. These brief bouts of stress can actually *enhance* our brain function and engages our beneficial fight-or-flight response we have for survival.

Ongoing stress, however, is detrimental because you never really have a chance to recover from the effects of fight-or-flight—you’re constantly in a threatened state. Your immune, reproductive, excretory, and digestive systems are all affected by chronic stress. Here are a few ways you can manage your stress and transform it into something you can cope with:

- ◇ **Begin a daily meditation activity.** This is fantastic for stress management because you can do this anywhere, anytime! Try downloading the “**Headspace**” app, which uses proven meditation and mindfulness techniques to train your mind for a healthier and happier life. And it’s free!
- ◇ **Remind yourself to breathe.** When we are stressed, we often forget to breathe. Consciously take a few deep breaths in and slowly exhale.
- ◇ **Help others.** Flip the page for this one!
- ◇ **Move.** Yoga, a walk in the park, dancing ... any type of movement will help to release that stressful energy.



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## Stress-Busting Foods

**Spinach**— This leafy green contains folate, which produces dopamine, a pleasure-inducing brain chemical, helping you keep calm.

**Turkey breast**— The amino acid found in turkey (tryptophan), helps produce serotonin, the chemical that regulates hunger and feelings of happiness and well-being.

**Yogurt**— The bacteria in your gut might be contributing to stress. Consuming probiotics in yogurt has been found to reduce brain activity in areas that handle emotion, including stress.

**Salmon**— The omega-3 fatty acids in salmon have anti-inflammatory properties that may help counteract the negative effects of stress hormones.

**Blueberries**— The antioxidants and phytonutrients found in berries fight help to improve your body's response to stress and fight stress-related free radicals.

**Dark chocolate**— The antioxidants in cocoa trigger the walls of your blood vessels to relax, lowering blood pressure and improving circulation.



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