

Springtime

The season associated with new beginnings, growth, and rejuvenation is upon us.

This is an opportunity for you to step into a new season in your life, one that you choose and create. It is a powerful moment where conscious choices ignite transformational change.

What nourishing choices are you making today?

Taking a break to enjoy a walk outdoors.

Choosing a healthy meal with foods that include all colors of the rainbow.

Making time for stretching and relaxation.

## Debby Schiffer, Wellness Director for BURLCO & TRICO

### Practical Ways to Handle Stress



RELAX

Stress is inevitable. It walks in and out of our lives on a regular basis. And it can easily walk all over us unless we take action. Fortunately, there are many things you can do to minimize and cope with stress. Here are a few ideas for handling stress without causing more strain and hassle.

**Figure out where the stress is coming from.**

Oftentimes, when we're stressed, it seems like a big mess with stressors appearing from every angle. We start to feel like we're playing a game of dodge ball, ducking and darting so we don't get smacked by a barrage of balls. We take a defensive position, and not a good one at that.

Instead of feeling like you're flailing day to day, identify what you're actually stressed about. Is it a specific project at work, income taxes or other financial concerns, a dispute with your boss, a heap of laundry, a fight with your family?

By getting specific and pinpointing the stressors in your life, you're one step closer to getting organized and taking action.

**Consider what you can control—and work on that.**

While you can't control what your boss does, what your in-laws say or the sour state of the economy, you can control how you react, how you accomplish work, how you spend your time and what you spend your money on.

The worst thing for stress is trying to take control over uncontrollable things. Because when you inevitably fail — since it's beyond your control — you only get more stressed out and feel helpless. So after you've thought through what's stressing you out, identify the stressors that you can control, and determine the best ways to take action.

Take the example of a work project. If the scope is stressing you out, talk it over with your supervisor or break the project down into step-wise tasks and deadlines.

Stress can be paralyzing. Doing what's within your power moves you forward and is empowering and invigorating.

Tense people often feel incredible levels of guilt about taking it easy and being good to themselves. Prolonged tension can cause muscle aches, pain, and fatigue. Back and headache pain are the most common physical symptoms of too much stress and tension. Other symptoms include the following:

- Insomnia
- Poor decision making
- Reduced physical energy
- Increased errors
- Burnout
- Lower quality of work
- Difficulty concentrating
- Tendency to avoid others

**Tense people rarely take lunch breaks, read books, or take a walk. So what can you do to help yourself?**

**Take time for you!**

Ask yourself: "Am I giving too much to others and not enough for myself? Do I need to take time to pamper myself?" If the answers are "yes," refuse to feel guilty about it and do it!

If you feel guilty when you do something enjoyable for yourself, chances are you will stop doing it. Ultimately, you lose. You may be living your life through other people's standards and expectations. Take control of your guilt-producing thoughts. Focus on the benefits to you and your family that will occur when you are a more relaxed and energized person.

**Go to lunch and don't rush**

Take a long lunch break at least three times a week. For some, just taking your designated lunch break is considered a privilege. Don't do business during lunch. Read a novel over a cup of tea. Sit quietly. If it's a nice day, go for a walk outside, listen to the birds. Eat slowly and enjoy your food. Try a new restaurant. Go out with a good friend and agree not to discuss problems or business. Talk about possibilities.

**Exercise more**

Join an aerobics class, go to the gym, play tennis, ride a bike, hike on weekends, go to a fitness resort, or jog with friends. Exercise will do more to reduce stress hormones and chemicals in our body than any other activity.

**Learn deep relaxation skills**

Take a class in yoga or tai chi, imagery training, progressive relaxation, or autogenics. Practice your relaxation skills every day.

**Listen to relaxation tapes**

Audiotapes are an excellent way to learn how to let go and relax. Develop the skill of deep relaxation that will cleanse your body of damaging stress hormones and chemicals.

**Listen to relaxing music**

Any type of music you find enjoyable can help you to let go and relax. New Age music and some classical music are particularly helpful for reducing stress.

ahh...chooo



# Spring Has Finally Sprung...get out the tissues!

## Keep Pollen at Bay

Spring. After a long, cold winter, most of us look forward to rising temperatures and blooming plants. But if you have asthma, allergies, or both (as about 50% of people with asthma do), the pollen that comes with the season can take a toll.

Pollen allergies can trigger your asthma.

Pollen blows for 50 miles, so you don't have to have a tree in your back yard to have a problem.

The best way to fend off an asthma attack is to stay indoors. That's not always fun or practical.



Here are things you can do to help keep your asthma in check while still enjoying the change in season.

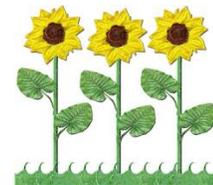
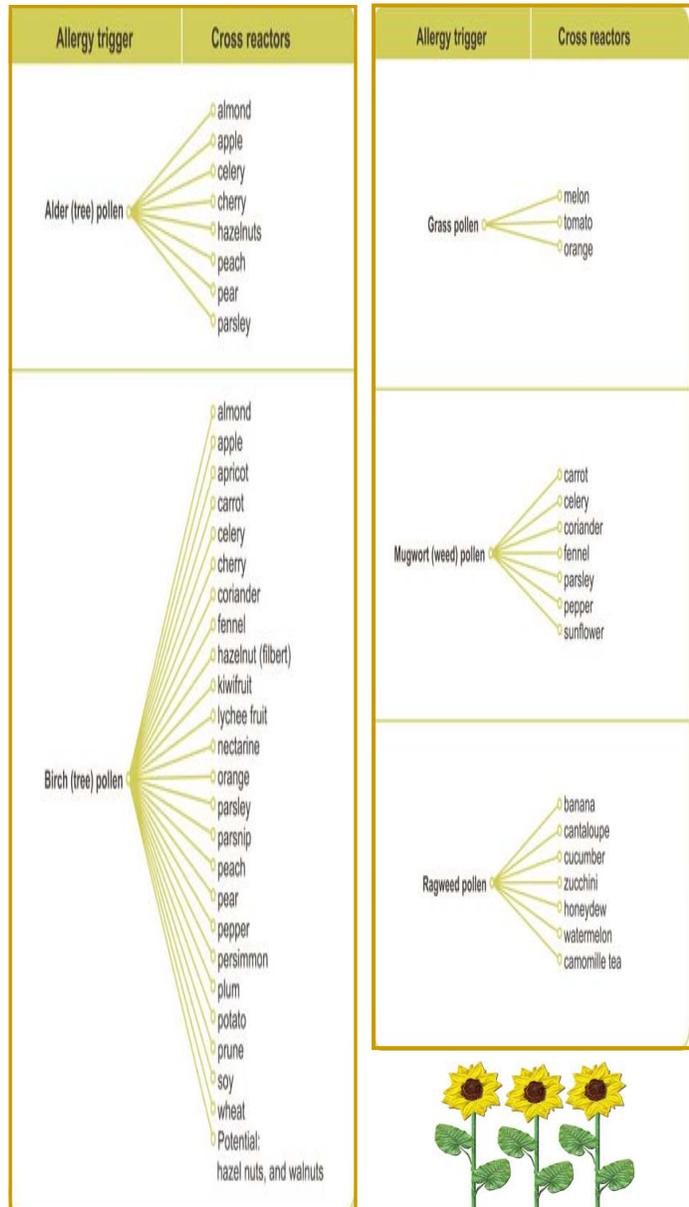
- ◆ Avoid the outdoors when pollen levels are high, usually between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m. There are apps that can tell you the local pollen count, including one from WebMD.
- ◆ After being outside, take a shower and wash your clothes. "Pollens stick to your body, so if you don't do this, you'll transfer pollens inside your home.
- ◆ Dry your sheets and clothes indoors. Outdoor clotheslines can leave your laundry coated with pollen.
- ◆ In your home and your car, opt for air conditioning instead of open windows. Set your unit to recirculate so it doesn't bring in air from outside.
- ◆ When choosing ground cover for your yard, pick something that doesn't produce much pollen, like Irish moss.
- ◆ Keep your grass short. If possible, find someone to mow your lawn, fertilize, and do the gardening. If you do it yourself, wear a mask.
- ◆ Do most of your working out indoors. If you exercise outside, take your asthma medications before you go. An antihistamine and two puffs of your asthma pump before exercise can prevent an asthma attack.

Resource: For more information visit [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)

## Foods that may worsen your seasonal allergies

Eating certain foods during allergy season can make your seasonal allergies worse. At the same time, having a seasonal allergy can cause you to have a minor allergy to some of these foods. Your body can sometimes mistake this food as pollen and trigger a "cross-reaction", causing itchiness and tingling of the lips, mouth, tongue or throat. Use the charts below to find out what may make your allergies worse this spring.

Resource: Revolution Health



## Distracted Driving

### Is texting worth risking your life or someone else's?

*That may seem like an easy question to answer. Sadly, though, thumbing away on a Smartphone has become a standard driving pastime, despite all the warnings and laws.*

Anyone who drives anywhere can witness the dangerous behavior of many people using mobile devices while driving. Toss in other driver distractions such as pets, eating or grooming, and you've got the makings for a roadside tragedy.

#### Are you guilty?

- Leave calls, checking e-mails, and other distractions until you park the car.
- Make a silent promise to yourself to drive safely from now on.
- When you drive, drive.

#### Set a good example for others, too.

- Have heart-to-heart talks with the other drivers in your life about paying attention to the world around them when behind the wheel.
- Make sure your kids know the rules of the road.

For safe driving tips, go to [www.DistractedDrivingSafetyAlliance.org](http://www.DistractedDrivingSafetyAlliance.org).



#### Enjoy the Season

Spring is the perfect time to shed old habits that no longer work for you and begin healthy new ones. Improve your life through a good old-fashioned spring cleaning with better diet and fitness

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- ◆ Making time for stretching and relaxation.
- ◆ Appreciating the people you love.
- ◆ Spring into action and make some positive choices towards wellness!

#### Lighten Up Your Diet

It's easy to eat a healthy and delicious diet in the spring when fresh produce is available.

- ◆ Try seasonal staples such as asparagus, spinach, strawberries and apricots.
- ◆ Grill lean cuts of meat or fish outdoors.
- ◆ Dine al fresco by eating a meal in your backyard or go on a picnic...before the bugs come!!



#### Mix Fitness and Fun

Let the season inspire you to be more active and stay fit.

- ◆ Take exercise outside by going on a hike, walking in the park, or riding your bike
- ◆ Do weight-training exercises twice weekly to tone muscles and prepare for swim season.
- ◆ Exercise with a friend for camaraderie and a dose of healthy competition.



## Warm Pear Spinach Salad

#### Recipe Corner

1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
1 medium onion, thinly sliced  
1/2 bunch spinach, washed and roughly chopped

salt and pepper to taste  
1-2 pears washed, cored and thinly sliced  
1/2 - 1 oz blue cheese, crumbled



In a skillet heat the olive oil until it just begins to shimmer. Add onions and cook over a low heat stirring often until onions take on a deep golden color and begin to caramelize, which could take 20 minutes or so. Remove from pan and set aside.

2. Once you have washed the spinach, just leave the water on it and add it to the skillet. Cook until just wilted which only takes a couple of minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste and a bit more olive oil if it seems too dry.

3. Plate the spinach and top with sliced pears, onions and cheese. Serve warm or at room temperature.

