

Meditation of the month

# Up in the air

Release the balloon, release your stress. By Jill Lawson

Just being alive can be very stressful, and stress is not a healthy attribute to living disease-free. While some types of stress can be beneficial, such as a vigorous workout when we are feeling strong, others, such as staying up all night worrying about making ends meet, are not good for you.

Stressors come in many forms. Anything that challenges your status quo is considered to be a source of stress. It is important to realise that the way we react or respond to a stressful situation can help us, or harm us. Circumstances that agitate our mind or cause physical discomfort and pain can potentially damage our health, but only if we let them.

From a heavy work load, to an over indulgence in junk food, our minds and bodies can only take so much before we begin to suffer unpleasant physical, mental, and emotional consequences.

## Stress meditation

The following is a simple guided meditation that will help you alleviate the uneasiness of being under stress. If practised often, you will be able to say goodbye to the ill-effects of stress and say hello to a happy mind and a healthy body.

Sit or lie down in a position that allows your body to relax. Close your eyes and take several deep breaths. Bring your awareness to your breath, and imagine you are filling every cell in your body with fresh oxygen.

Imagine a large clear balloon about the size of your body floating above your head. Begin to place the source of your stress inside the balloon. If your daily commute to work causes stress, put that in the balloon. If there are situations in your life that bother you, put them inside the balloon. If a pending agenda makes you feel tense, it also goes into the balloon.

Now, imagine the balloon encapsulating the sources of all of your stress. See it barely able to hold on to the stressors of your life, full, heavy, and looming above you.

Next, with your mind's eye, see the balloon beginning to lift. Watch it rise a little higher, and then a little higher, as it ascends effortlessly away from your body.

The balloon is there to carry the load of your sources of stress away from you. Watch it float until you can no longer see it. When the balloon disappears from your internal vision, notice how much lighter your body feels. Trust that you are no longer under the weight of your stress, and believe that you can face life with an entirely new, and healthy perspective.