

Nourish Your Nervous System:

Tips To Decrease Your Stress

Chronic stress can wreak havoc on our bodies and on our health (and especially on women's health). As the tip of the iceberg, stress can increase your risk of heart problems, obesity, digestive issues, headaches, fertility and menstruation challenges, sleep disturbances, etc., etc., etc. - and, of course, **it can increase pain**. Stress can cause your muscles to tense/spasm, which can increase pain. When you feel stressed, levels of the hormone cortisol rise. This can cause inflammation and pain over time too. *And there is no shortage of stress in our lives* - life will always be throwing things at you.

01

Make it a priority to **NOURISH YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM**. It's ideal to create a daily practice for nervous-system-nourishment, but even weekly is good too. Some is always better than none! Here is a list of science-backed ways to bust that stress!

- **Exercise** - Science says this is probably the best way to deal with stress in the body! Keep moving your body.
- **Meditation** - There are many great free resources for this, like free videos on YouTube or recordings on SoundCloud, or apps for your phone. Check out the next page for some of my favourite options.
- **Acupuncture**
- **Breathing Exercises** - Breathing is a quick and powerful tool for stress-busting! Check out the next page for more resources on this.
- **Time in nature**
- **Prayer**
- **Self Hypnosis** - This probably isn't what you think it is. Curious? Check out the next page for more resources on this.
- **Singing or chanting**
- **Improve Your Sleep** (see resources that follow)

02

Try tracking your stress levels. Do you notice any patterns? Some forms of nervous-system-nourishment might work better for you than other. Some forms of stress might be worse for you than others. See the end of this guide for a handy sleep/stress tracker!



Resources for Stress Busting!

Meditation

- Often referred to as the Velvet Voice of Stillness, [davidji](#) is possibly the most prolific creator of guided meditations in the world.
 - You can find a [selection of his guided meditations here](#).
 - You can also find a [10-day meditation series here](#).
- There are a number of great meditation apps out there too. I really like [Insight Timer](#), [Waking Up](#), and [Calm](#). Insight Timer has some free options, and Waking Up has a fantastic introductory course inside the app.
- YouTube has many free meditations, and so does Spotify and SoundCloud. Have a search and test some out. Meditation is often very personal, so if you don't immediately find one you like, keep looking!

Breathing Exercises

There are so many options! Start with 2-5 minutes, 1-2x/day (yes, as little as 2 minutes can help!). Keep experimenting until you find a good fit - here are some options to try:

- [Boxed Breathing](#) (or 4-4-4-4 or 4x4).
- [4-7-8 breath](#)
- [Extended Exhale Breathing](#)
- [The Physiological Sigh](#)

Breathing exercises might feel foreign to start, but should never leave you gasping for air. Adjust your numbers or breath if you don't feel comfortable. Breathing exercises often have a profound influence on how we feel but it takes a few weeks - stick with it for at least 6 weeks. Better yet, make it a habit like brushing your teeth.

Non-Sleep Deep Rest & Self Hypnosis

- Non-sleep deep rest is an umbrella term for things that people can do to encourage a state of relaxation, calm and focus. It appears to let the brain rest, and can even help you learn more quickly. It's also similar to meditation and can help your sleep and boost your mood too. [Check out Dr. Andrew Huberman's free guided example of NSDR here](#).
- Hypnosis is a naturally occurring state of highly focused attention, and hypnotherapy allows you to harness the power of your mind to change the way you think and experience the world around you. [Self-hypnosis can be done with an app like Reveri](#).

Resources for *Stress Busting!*

Sleep

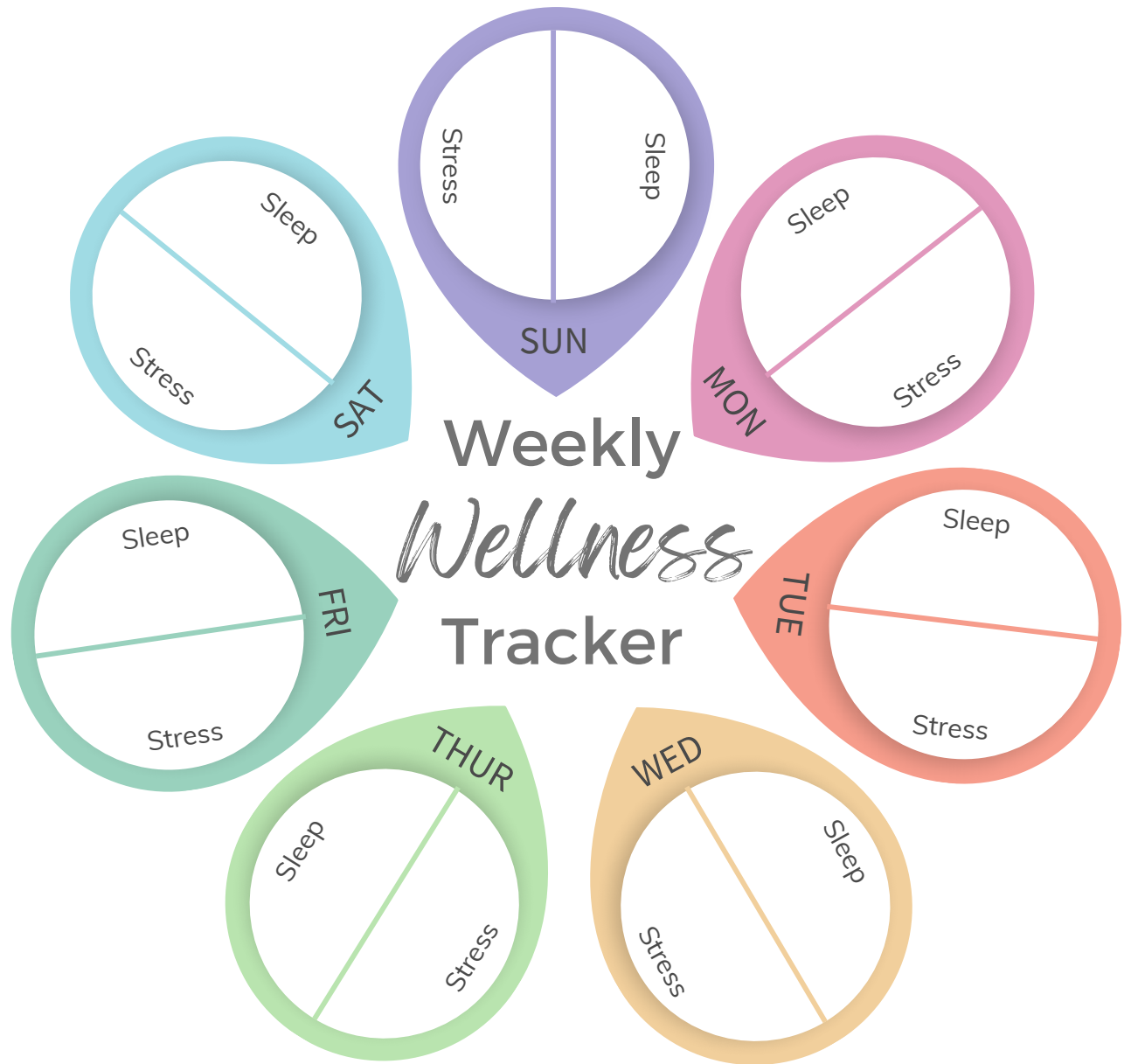
Improving your sleep is still likely the #1 way to improve your overall health and to nourish your nervous system.

For the best evidence-based sleep recommendations I've ever seen, [check out this summary from Dr. Andrew Huberman](#). Supplements and other advice aren't always options during pregnancy (always consult your maternity care provider), but items #1-5 typically are, as are some of the others on the list. Most of us would benefit from at least one of the things on this list. Check out [Dr. Huberman's sleep recommendations here](#).

Try tracking your sleep in relationship to your stress levels. Do you notice any patterns? See the end of this guide for a handy sleep/stress tracker!



Nurturance**Health**



Sleep (hours)

4 5 6 7 8 9

Stress

