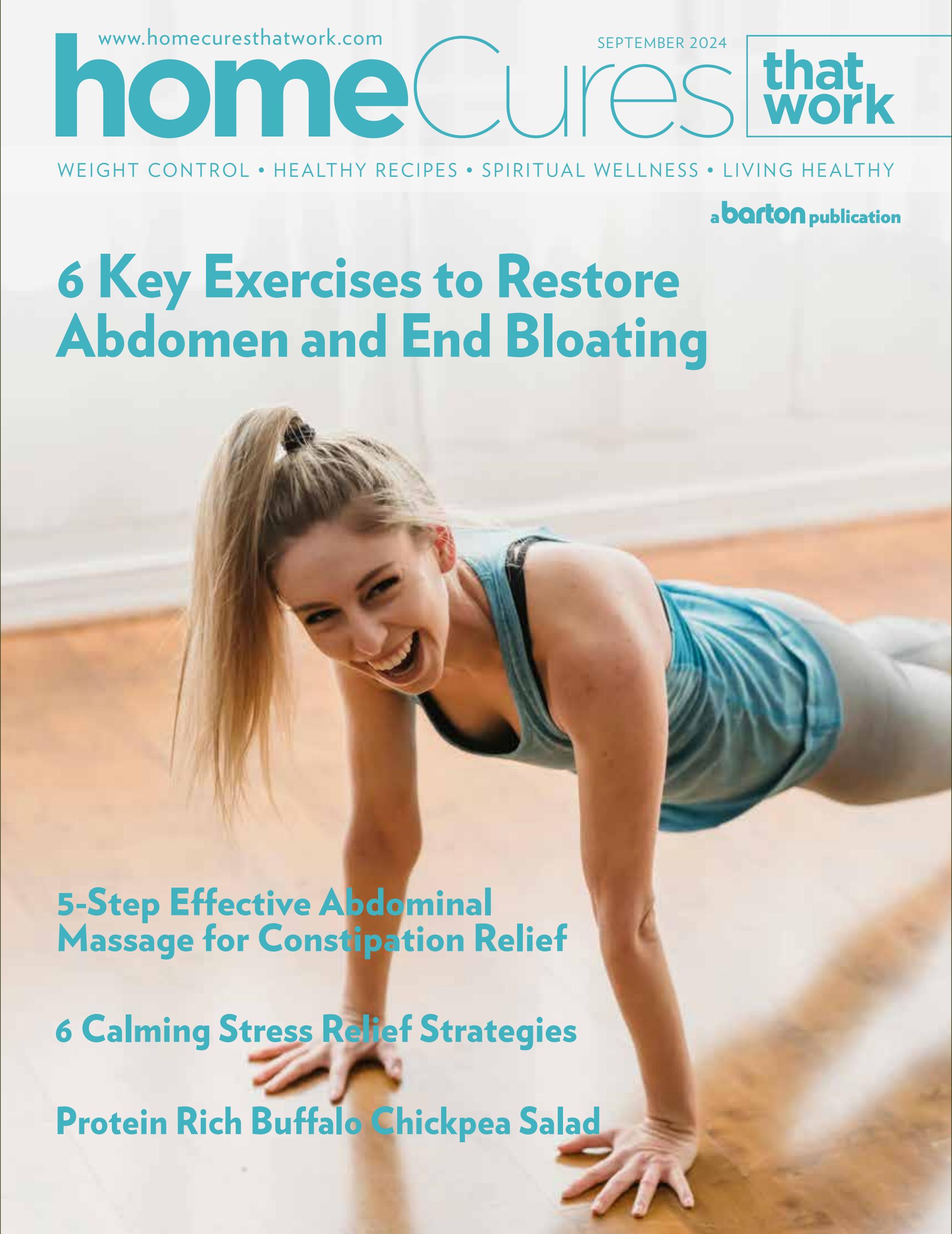


6 Key Exercises to Restore Abdomen and End Bloating

5-Step Effective Abdominal Massage for Constipation Relief

6 Calming Stress Relief Strategies

Protein Rich Buffalo Chickpea Salad



Home Cures That Work

Stress and anxiety can significantly impact digestive health, often leading to issues like constipation, gas, and bloating. Incorporating abdominal massage into your routine can be a highly effective way to alleviate these symptoms naturally.

Abdominal massage stimulates peristalsis, the wave-like motions of the intestines that help move waste through the digestive system, making it an excellent remedy for digestive discomfort.

For optimal results, this technique can be combined with a holistic approach that includes a healthy diet, regular exercise, and stress management.

A balanced diet, rich in fiber from sources like chickpeas, supports digestive health and provides essential nutrients that boost overall well-being. Chickpea salads, which can be prepared in advance and enjoyed for days, offer a delicious and nutritious way to incorporate more fiber into your diet.

Additionally, stress management techniques such as deep breathing, mindfulness, and listening to calming music can further enhance digestive health by reducing the stress and anxiety that often exacerbate gastrointestinal issues.

By integrating these strategies, you can take control of both your mental and physical health, ensuring a well-functioning digestive system and a more balanced life.

For your health,

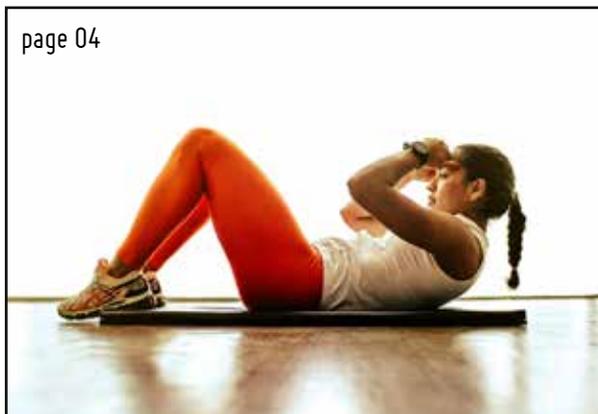
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04 6 KEY EXERCISES TO RESTORE ABDOMEN AND END BLOATING

Abdominal bloating, often mistaken for digestive issues, can be caused by an abnormal muscle reflex, which can be corrected with targeted exercises to restore normal abdominal function.



08 5-STEP EFFECTIVE ABDOMINAL MASSAGE FOR CONSTIPATION RELIEF

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This article provides six natural strategies to help manage stress and anxiety, emphasizing the importance of exercise, nutrition, breathing techniques, mindfulness, soothing sounds, and seeking professional help when needed.



13 PROTEIN RICH BUFFALO CHICKPEA SALAD

This chickpea salad combines mashed chickpeas with a tangy mixture of hot sauce and Greek yogurt, mixed with fresh vegetables, dill, and crumbled blue cheese for a flavorful and satisfying dish.

6 KEY EXERCISES TO RESTORE ABDOMEN AND END BLOATING

by Dr. Scott Saunders, M.D.

“It looks like I’m pregnant!” Marge exclaimed. Treated abdominal distention, bloating continued for over three years. “Every time I eat anything I immediately get bloating. My abdomen fills up and I can’t eat anymore. It gets so pushed-out that I feel like I’m nine-months pregnant! It’s frustrating... and very uncomfortable – I can’t eat anything!”

I think, “How odd that she has been ‘unable to eat anything for three years’ and has been on very restrictive diets, but she is overweight – she is still able to eat too much.” This tells me it isn’t a food sensitivity, infection, or intestinal problem. People who actually have intestinal problems lose weight when they can’t eat.

Abdominal bloating affects 10-30% of any population.[1] At some time in their lives, almost everyone will feel bloated. Many people experience the same type of bloating again and again. The standard answers from a gastroenterologist would tell us that bloating is due to one of the following conditions:[2]

- Gas
- Indigestion
- Infection
- Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO)
- Fluid retention
- Food intolerances
- Irritable bowel Syndrome (IBS)
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)
- Gastroparesis
- Gynecological disorders

- Constipation
- Dehydration
- Not enough or too much fiber in the diet
- Food intolerance
- Pregnancy
- Nutrient deficiencies, including magnesium
- Certain medicines
- Gallstones or gallbladder disease
- Ascites
- Abdominal obesity

Each of these are very different illnesses and would need their own book to explain. But while each of these can have bloating associated with them, none of them are the main cause of abdominal distention after eating. Nothing worked to treat Marge’s bloating. She went to multiple doctors, gastroenterologists, acupuncturists, herbalists, and naturopathic physicians, but was no better. She took antibiotics, vitamins and herbs of all types. One antibiotic for SIBO cost her almost a thousand dollars! She was so uncomfortable that she was willing to pay for it, but it didn’t help at all! She also tried many diets. She seemed to have mild relief from a limited carbohydrate diet called FODMAPS, which is an acronym for the types of sugars to avoid. But, after only a few weeks it came back just as strong while she was still on the diet.

The Bloating Mystery Solved

Many years ago, the answer to this riddle was found, but has since gotten lost. It is not taught in medical schools, so gastroenterologists are not aware of it. In 1962 a general internist reported on 92 patients with bloating.[3] They were all found to have the same problem. They had many different treatments and surgeries, but none improved. One woman was sure she was going to have a baby. The problem was, she was past menopause, and had no partner. She told the doctor that she was with child from the Holy Ghost, and insisted on going into the hospital so she could have the baby. She was very distressed when x-rays of her abdomen showed that she was not even pregnant. This is important because the doctor attributed her case of bloating to hysteria, her mental illness.

Many of these patients with severe bloating were so uncomfortable they went to the hospital for surgery. In those days there were no CT scans, so they had to cut the abdomen open to see what was inside, called an “exploratory laparotomy.”

They were sure it must be something terrible. The surgeons did many of these procedures, but found nothing at all! There were no tumors, no gas in the bowel, no obstruction, no distended bowel, everything was normal! It was all a big mystery. Finally, the anesthesiologist noticed that as the patients went to sleep, their abdomens went down to normal, before the surgeon had even cut. This was the clue to the mystery.

Your Abdominal Canister

Your intestines are contained like a bag of snakes that allows them to move around freely, except for a couple of places where the blood vessels are attached. There is a set of muscles that surround the bag,

suspending the contents, called the “abdominal canister.” On the bottom there are muscles of the pelvic floor which hold them up. In the back is the multifidus muscles along the spinal column. Around the sides are the transversus abdominis muscles that hold them in from the ribs to the front. On the top is the diaphragm, the same muscles that are used to breathe. [4]

If there is a rupture in any of these muscles, you get a hernia. The bag that holds the intestines, fat, and often some intestines, push outside of the abdomen. Since the food you eat must traverse every inch of the intestines to get out the other side, hernias can cause blockage of the intestines, and severe bloating -- associated with vomiting and pain.

The Cause of Abdominal Distention

In the cases of exploratory laparotomy above, the anesthesiologist determined that the cause of the distention was muscle spasm, which relaxed when given. It was the only logical explanation. Interestingly, there is a normal reflex to maintain pressure in the abdomen by the abdominal canister muscles when eating. These muscles have specific reflexes during eating to help move things through the intestines, such as when you push to have a bowel movement.

The reason people get bloated every time they eat is not due to gas. The bloating is due to spasm[5] of the pelvic floor and diaphragm muscles, with relaxation of the multifidi in the back and transversus abdominis in the front, causing the belly to push out, making the person look and feel bloated. Since this is an abnormal muscle reflex to eating, it is not related

to any specific type of food. Anything that causes the stomach to stretch could elicit this abnormal response – even plain water.

Though this abnormal muscle reflex has been known for many decades, it is still not taught or recognized in the medical system. Even functional medicine specialists or naturopathic practitioners have never heard of it. This is why Marge could find no help for her SIBO – she didn’t have SIBO! She had an abnormal abdominal canister reflex.

The normal reflex is for the pelvic floor and the diaphragm to relax to allow room for food in the stomach. While the transverse abdominis and multifidus contract to maintain pressure and hold everything in. What happens in abdominal bloating is just the opposite. You get spasms of the diaphragm and the pelvic floor, creating more pressure and pushing the contents of the abdomen out. You can purposely create this same abdominal distention when you take a deep breath with your diaphragm. The belly will push out and look and feel bloated.

How to Distinguish Abdominal Distention From Other Causes of Bloating

The other causes of bloating or abdominal distention noted above, such as SIBO, have different symptoms.[6]The characteristics of the abnormal abdominal canister reflex include:

- Bloating comes almost immediately with eating

- Can happen even when drinking plain water
- No passing excessive gas
- Uncomfortable, but not usually painful or tender
- Intermittent – it comes with eating, but resolves completely between meals
- No digestive problems like diarrhea or constipation
- No fevers
- No nausea or vomiting

Repairing the Abdominal Canister Reflex

While medical doctors are not aware of this cause of abdominal distention, physical therapists do know about it. Physical therapy to helped Mage her restore the normal abdominal canister reflex. Exercises helped her muscles respond normally.

- Diaphragmatic breathing exercises
- Pelvic floor exercises
- Abdominal muscle exercises
- Back exercises

These specific exercises regain control over the abdominal canister and restore the normal reflex so eating allows the diaphragm and pelvic floor to relax. While the transverse abdominis and multifidus muscles maintain support.

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING[7]

To breathe from your diaphragm, lie down on your back with your knees bent, and breathe as deeply as you can without letting your chest rise. If you have one hand on your chest, and the other on your abdomen, let the abdominal hand rise while the chest stays stable. Then, let all your air out, push the air out completely, allowing the diaphragm to relax. This can even be done after eating to relieve abdominal distention.

PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES

Pelvic floor exercises are often recommended for women who have urinary incontinence. But they are also for men, especially if they have abdominal distention with eating.

KEGEL EXERCISES ARE FOR STRENGTH[8]

- Locate your pelvic floor muscles which are the ones you squeeze to stop the flow of urine.
- Tighten those muscles for three seconds, then relax for three seconds.

- Repeat this 10 times for a full set.
- Do one set three times per day.

The “happy baby” pose helps to relax the pelvic floor and stop distention[9].

- Lie flat on your back
- Bring your knees toward your chest at a 90-degree angle with your feet straight up
- Reach up and hold on to your feet. Spread your knees apart.
- Flex your heels into your hand and gently rock from side-to-side. Remain in this position for several breaths, inhaling and exhaling deeply.

ABDOMINAL EXERCISES[10]

Doing sit-ups is a great exercise for the abdominal muscles. Try doing them from side-to-side (touching your left knee with your right elbow, and vice-versa). One exercise that specifically targets the abdominal canister is the “dead bug.”

DEAD BUG

- Lie on your back with your arms extended up toward the ceiling and your knees bent.

- Straighten your left leg and lower your right arm to reach behind your head, parallel to the floor. Do not let your arms or legs touch the ground — keep them around 6 inches from the ground.

- Hold for about 10 seconds, or as long as you can.

- Return your arm and leg to the starting position and alternate sides.

BACK EXERCISES

Planks

- Get into “push-up position” with your arms extended.
- Hold for as long as you can.

After only a few visits with the physical therapist, and doing her daily exercises at home, Marge was back to normal. She no longer had any abdominal distention, bloating, or discomfort with eating. And the best thing, she could eat anything she wanted.



Sources:

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5-Step Effective Abdominal Massage for Constipation Relief



Abdominal massage was once a popular remedy for constipation and remains a safe, natural method to relieve discomfort, including gas and bloating. When performed correctly, a stomach massage stimulates peristalsis—the wave-like motions of your intestines that help move waste through your digestive system, reducing the time it takes for waste to leave your body.

The best part? You can perform this massage on yourself, ask a partner to help, or visit a therapist who specializes in abdominal massage.

“I was experiencing lower back pain and visited a chiropractor,” shares Angie E.

from Portland, Oregon. “It turned out to be gas trapped in my intestines. The chiropractor referred me to a massage therapist who—much to my relief—was able to alleviate the discomfort.”

Abdominal massage is a quick and effective natural remedy for mild constipation or gas. “The relief was almost immediate when the gas was massaged out,” Angie adds. “Although I haven’t had such intense pain since, I occasionally use self-massage to relieve bloating.”

How to Perform an Abdominal Massage

Giving yourself an abdominal massage is a simple way to promote bowel movements and get your digestive system back on track. This technique works effectively for both occasional and chronic constipation, helping to alleviate bloating, cramping, and pressure.

Steps for an Abdominal Massage

FIND A COMFORTABLE POSITION

Lie down on your back in a quiet, relaxing space. You can lie flat or elevate your

legs for added comfort.

BEGIN WITH GENTLE CIRCULAR MOTIONS

Using your fingers, massage your abdomen in small, clockwise circles. Start on the right side near your pelvis, move up to your rib cage, across to the left side, and then down to your left pelvis. Gradually work your way inward toward your belly button.

CONTINUE FOR 3 MINUTES

Apply gentle but firm pressure as you massage.

INCREASE THE PRESSURE

After the initial 3 minutes, apply slightly firmer pressure. Spend about one minute massaging from your right pelvis to your rib cage, another minute across to your left rib cage, and a final minute down to your left pelvis and up to your belly button.

MESSAGE FOR A TOTAL OF 10 MINUTES

Continue moving in a clockwise direction. The massage should be comfortable and pain-free.

This technique encourages your intestines to follow their natural motion, helping to move trapped gas or stool

along.

Tips for Effective Abdominal Massage

Once you've mastered the technique, you can perform an abdominal massage as needed.

Here are a few helpful tips:

- For constipation relief, try massaging about an hour after eating, first thing in the morning, or before bed.
- To reduce bloating, a lighter touch works best immediately after a meal.
- Limit abdominal massages to once or twice a day.
- Lighten the pressure if you experience pain.
- Avoid abdominal massage if you've recently had surgery or have a bowel obstruction.

Additional Benefits of Abdominal Massage

Abdominal massage is beneficial whether you've been dealing with constipation for a short period or an extended time. In addition to relieving a bloated or gassy stomach, it may also support lymphatic drainage and reduce fluid retention.

Beyond digestive relief, abdominal massage offers other health benefits, including

EASING MENSTRUAL CRAMPS

A five-minute abdominal massage each day during the week before your period can help alleviate cramps.

IMPROVING CIRCULATION

Abdominal massage enhances blood flow, delivering more oxygen and nutrients to your organs, which can boost their function.

NATURAL DETOXIFICATION

This massage helps move lymph around your body, aiding in the removal of toxins and waste material from your intestines.

ENHANCING MOOD

Like any massage, massaging the abdomen can improve mood and relieve emotional tension.

Other Ways to Support Gut Health

While abdominal massage is an excellent remedy for constipation, it won't address underlying gut issues like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). To further support gut health, consider the following strategies:

NOURISH YOUR BODY

Improve gut health by eliminating processed foods, gluten, dairy, or other trigger foods. Incorporate probiotic-rich foods like alternative-milk yogurt, kefir, kombucha, sauerkraut, kimchee, and fermented vegetables to promote a healthy gut biome.

TRY A COLON CLEANSE

A colon cleanse can reset your digestive system and restore regular bowel movements. It can be effective way

to eliminate accumulated toxins and waste from your colon.

ESTABLISH A WELLNESS ROUTINE

Consistent wellness practices are key to a healthy gut. Start by tracking your hydration, sleep, exercise, and diet in a wellness journal. Gradually add new habits, like deep breathing or meditation, to manage stress and improve digestion.

Key Takeaways

Abdominal massage is a simple and effective way to relieve constipation and support digestion. By massaging in gentle, circular motions, you can stimulate your intestines and encourage bowel movements. For overall gut health, pair this technique with a balanced diet, regular exercise, and, when necessary, a colon cleanse.



YOUR GUIDE TO STAYING CALM: 6 NATURAL STRATEGIES FOR STRESS RELIEF



FEELING OVERWHELMED BY concerns about your health, finances, or family? Stress and anxiety can make it difficult to enjoy life, especially when you can't rely on your usual coping methods like meeting friends for coffee, hitting the gym, or indulging in some retail therapy. So, how can you manage anxiety in these uncertain times? Follow our guide to regain control of your

thoughts and ease the physical symptoms of stress.

Understanding the differences between worry, stress, and anxiety is key to managing them effectively. Worry involves repetitive thoughts about concerns, such as whether you left the stove on. Stress is a heightened response to these concerns, potentially affecting your overall well-being. Anxiety, stemming from prolonged

worry and stress, can lead to issues like sleeplessness and exacerbated medical conditions.

The mind-body connection means that anxiety can manifest in physical symptoms, including difficulty sleeping, loss of appetite, upset stomach, headaches, chest tightness, and even heart palpitations. Everyone experiences stress differently based on their genetic makeup,

gender, and life experiences. The good news? Managing your anxiety can alleviate these physical symptoms. While stress impacts the body, managing it often starts in the mind, and you can make a difference right from home.

Here are six natural strategies to help you stay calm and manage stress effectively.

1. EXERCISE AWAY THE STRESS.

Physical activity is excellent for transforming nervous energy into a calming ritual. Exercise helps dissipate stress chemicals and brings your body back to balance more quickly.

2. NOURISH YOUR BODY.

Instead of stress-eating unhealthy foods, focus on nourishing your body with wholesome options like nuts, fish, vegetables, and fruits. Certain nutrients, such as those in green tea, lemon balm extract, and ashwagandha, can also help maintain healthy cortisol levels.

3. PRACTICE DEEP BREATHING.

Slow, steady breathing can calm your body when you're feeling overwhelmed. Try the "4 by 4" technique: inhale for a count of four, hold for four, and exhale for four. You can also explore guided breathing exercises or meditation apps to deepen your practice.

4. ENGAGE IN MINDFULNESS.

Take a moment to stop and notice the world around you. Whether it's a flower, a tree, or even a puppy, these simple observations can halt anxious thoughts and refocus your mind, reducing your stress response.

5. LISTEN TO SOOTHING SOUNDS.

Music can be incredibly calming. Whether it's ocean sounds, nostalgic tunes, or even heavy metal, find the music that helps put your nerves at ease. There are plenty of playlists designed specifically to help calm you down.

6. SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP.

If these methods aren't enough, don't hesitate to reach out to a therapist or counselor. Seeking help is a smart step toward taking control of your well-being. Therapy can be a valuable resource for navigating difficult emotions and situations.

Don't ignore your anxiety—address it head-on. Long-term stress and anxiety can have serious impacts on your health, so take steps now to protect your physical and mental well-being.



Protein Rich Buffalo Chickpea Salad

Spicy and high in protein, this flavorful salad can be enjoyed on its own or served over a bed of greens. ►

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup hot sauce
- 2 tablespoons plain, full-fat Greek yogurt
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 celery stalk, finely chopped
- 1 medium carrot, finely chopped
- ¼ cup red onion, diced
- 2 tablespoons fresh dill, minced
- ¼ cup blue cheese, crumbled

DIRECTIONS

1. Place the chickpeas in a large mixing bowl and mash them with a fork until roughly mashed.
2. In a separate small bowl, whisk together the hot sauce, Greek yogurt, and sea salt.
3. Pour the yogurt mixture over the mashed chickpeas. Add the chopped celery, carrot, red onion, and dill. Stir until everything is well combined.
4. Gently fold in the crumbled blue cheese. Taste and adjust seasoning with more salt or hot sauce if desired. Enjoy within four days.

Chickpeas, also known as garbanzo beans, are a nutrient-dense legume packed with health benefits. They are an excellent source of plant-based protein, making them a great option for vegetarians and vegans. Rich in dietary fiber, chickpeas support digestive health and help maintain a feeling of fullness, which can aid in weight management.

They also provide essential vitamins and minerals, including iron, magnesium, and folate, which are important for energy production, bone health, and overall cellular function. Additionally, chickpeas have a low glycemic index, making them a good choice for stabilizing blood sugar levels.



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