

The Trager® Approach to Relieving Stress

By Angela Williams Duea

When stress takes over your body, your muscles tighten, your teeth clench, and your heart pounds. Adrenalin floods through your tissues, sending your body the fight-or-flight signal. Long-term exposure to stressors causes a constant state of body tension and emotional exhaustion, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Without a release, your body can react with headaches, chronic fatigue, ulcers, high blood pressure, insomnia, and a host of other health problems.

Stress is a fact of life, and is all-pervasive in our society. Surveys by Northwestern National Life found that one-fourth of employees view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives. Everyday events such as a misbehaving child or rush hour traffic add to chronic stressors such as job troubles, economic worries, family problems, or health issues. Learning how to deal with stress in ways that leave us pain-free and relaxed will increase our satisfaction with life and comfort in the way our bodies feel. The Trager® Approach can help relieve the symptoms of stress as well as training the body and mind to work in new, freer patterns.

“My body holds stress in my neck and shoulders,” says Janet Kohler, a recent Trager client. “Trager is really helpful in relieving the tension and that helps me deal with the actual causes of the stress. I am not battling pain and life stresses at once.” The Trager approach is a gentle alternative to massage that teaches the mind and body new patterns of movement. Trager helps recipients to become more aware of their bodies, to move in more balanced, pain-free ways, and to learn relaxation skills. “Trager work helped me find a mental and physical calm,” says another client, Bob Kaul. “This gave me the ability to be a sponge that absorbs with excitement the multitude of stuff that surrounds us.” Trager practitioners help to increase body awareness which encourages the client to

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change their patterns of tension, response to stress, and movement. Practitioners actively move the client's joints and limbs which provide positive, pleasant feelings in the passive recipient, triggering a new message for the central nervous system. This new way of feeling in the body often stimulates a new way of thinking as well. Patterns of restrictive movement are often released through this mind/body connection. Many times these changes are permanent.

A typical Trager session lasts for an hour to an hour and a half. You rest fully-clothed on a padded table while the practitioner gently touches soft tissue and moves your joints and limbs. These movements are slow and rhythmic, and do not push past any resistance in your muscles and joints.

A client, Joan Jones, says, “Trager sessions are not at all painful or rigorous. They involve a gentle rocking of the body which must be something like what one feels in the womb.” These new patterns are reinforced by a series of simple movements called Mentastics® that you practice between sessions. Mentastics movements promote even greater relaxation and freedom of movement. Stress is a fact of life, but stress-related pain and tension doesn't have to be. Participating in Trager sessions can retrain your mind and body to release stiffness and reset muscles to a neutral, relaxed state. By teaching your mind a new approach to stress, and learning new ways of movement, you help your body find wholeness, and experience a new level of serenity. “Before Trager I was willing to accept an increasing amount of pain as part of aging, stress, and nature,” Diana Ellis states. “Now I see each day as an opportunity to feel better and grow stronger.”

To locate a practitioner, go to the Trager® website www.trager-us.org or call the United States Trager® Association at 440-834-0308.

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