

# AVOID LETTING STRESS TAKE ITS TOLL

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO KEEP STRESS IN CHECK, WRITES DR. NADIA ALAM



DR. NADIA ALAM  
Column

Active efforts at stress reduction are becoming more and more important.

Even though Ontario has relaxed pandemic lockdown rules, reopened many activities (with precautions) and has vaccinated hundreds of thousands of people, many people still fear for their safety.

The pandemic has taken

a toll.

Stress and the hormones the human body releases in response to stress can lead to long-term problems.

These include: aches and pains from muscle ten-

sion, fatigue, insomnia, headaches, low back pain, high blood pressure, heartburn, trouble swallowing, abdominal pain and bloating, diarrhea, and impaired libido, fertility and sexual function.

Long-term, uncontrolled stress can increase the risk of heart attacks, diabetes, obesity, depression and so on.

It is well worth the effort to control stress so that it doesn't overwhelm you.

Managing stress starts with a healthy eating pattern and regular exercise,

and then moves onto many different approaches, such as:

- Finding ways to communicate, process and release strong emotions is better than simply repressing them. Consider talking to family and friends, journaling, and talking to counsellors and other professionals.

- Self-care activities help refocus kindness and compassion toward the self.

Take a walk in the evening with people and/or pets that you love. Read a

book. Listen to thoughtful podcast.

Take a hot bath. Pursue creativity. Gaze at the stars. Garden.

- Meditation has existed for millennia, and can help reduce anxiety, pain, depression, and stress. Meditation can be combined with movement as in tai chi or yoga.

It can also be done while sitting and allowing the mind to be present, non-judgmental and focused on breath, sensation and thought.

- Work to live, don't live to work. I work in a profession where I see just how short life is every day. So remember what's really important in life.

I myself lean toward hanging out with family, exercising (running, kickboxing and weight-training), painting and reading to make sure my mind stays strong and healthy. Mindfulness meditation remains a work-in-progress but is well worth the effort.

I would also recommend looking for and finding the things that centre your soul and calm your mind.

*Nadia Alam is a Halton physician and past president of the Ontario Medical Association. Her columns also appear on [www.drnadialam.com](http://www.drnadialam.com). She can be reached through her website.*

## A SPIRITED SHOWING IN TERRY'S MEMORY

For the second year in a row, the Georgetown Terry Fox Run was an online, virtual event. Engagement

was high and our supporters were spirited, running through Cedarvale, biking near the Gellert Centre or

simply following along as I live-tweeted my slow but sure tracing of Terry's footsteps over Kelly's Moun-

tain in Nova Scotia.

This year, as with the last, Georgetown embodied the spirit of Terry Fox, contributing to the fight against cancer in the face of adversity. We celebrated the 41st anniversary of the

Marathon of Hope. We raised money and awareness and kept this longstanding, local event alive with hopes that next year, we will again gather in person.

If you missed this year's

event but would still like to contribute to the Terry Fox Foundation, you may do so — with my sincere thanks — at [terryfox.org](http://terryfox.org).

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