

## The Visible Effects of Stress

### Get a Grip on Anxiety and Clear Your Complexion

Barbara Hey

Eons ago, back when humankind's main activities for the day were evading predators and foraging for food, stress was essential to survival. The body's fight-or-flight response to stress in the face of danger set off a chain reaction of physiological changes, priming the body for action and increasing the likelihood of escaping physical harm.

These days stress is more often induced by threats of the psychological or emotional kind, but the physiological response is the same. While stability-shattering events such as divorce, illness, or job loss take their toll, it's the low-grade, chronic stress--commuter traffic, rebellious computers, overbooked schedules--that

### Your Face Says It All

"Stress is a major deterrent to having good skin," according to Howard Murad, a dermatologist and CEO of skin care company Murad, Inc. "Even if you eat a perfect diet, if you're under stress you're not going to like the way it looks on you."

The link between stress and skin is becoming clearer all the time. "There are many studies that show the direct connection between the brain, endocrine system, and your skin," Murad says. One such study found that stress causes deterioration in the skin's permeability barrier, which is the body's front line of protection against the

*Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old.*

-Frank Kafka



Managing the low-grade, chronic stress of modern life can brighten your complexion.

does the greatest damage to body, mind, and even appearance. In addition to the well-documented stress-related illnesses such as heart disease, insomnia, and backaches, chronic stress can take a toll on your skin by increasing oil production and exacerbating acne, eczema, atopic dermatitis, and psoriasis. In other words, anxiety may be standing between you and a clear complexion.

outside world and essential to our survival. According to Peter Elias, a professor of dermatology at the University of California, San Francisco, who led the study, when that barrier breaks down, there is havoc: The release of molecules, whose job it is to shore up the barrier, initiates inflammation in

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deeper layers of the skin, causing irritation and dryness.

"When you're stressed, the barrier function of your skin gets damaged, and there's transdermal water loss," Murad says. This means fluid is lacking in all layers of the skin, which causes a dull complexion and exacerbates wrinkles.

Furthermore, stress throws the body's biochemical balance out of whack. The fight-or-flight response in the brain sends a message to the body to get ready for action. Then the adrenal glands produce adrenaline and noradrenaline, as well as the stress hormone cortisol, activating the metabolism and keying the body to respond to the threat, whether truly life-threatening or just being late for an appointment.

In regular, peaceful circumstances, the stressor goes away and hormones return to normal levels. But chronic stress--the scourge of modern life--can have long-lasting, chaotic effects on the body's biochemistry. Instead of dissipating, cortisol lingers in the body, which depresses the immune system and brings on hormonal imbalances, causing increased sebum production. Skin gets oilier and breakouts occur.

## Erasing the Fallout

The good news is, plenty can be done to ease stress, minimize its effects, and benefit skin and all-around health. In addition to stress-reducing practices (meditation, yoga, massage, exercise, vacations, etc.), nutrition supplements play an important role. "There are several important nutrients for skin that few get in sufficient quantities, particularly when under stress," according to Ann Louise Gittleman, Ph.D., clinical nutritionist and author several natural health books, including "The Fat Flush Plan" (McGraw Hill/Contemporary Books, 2002) and "The Living Beauty Detox Program" (Harper San Francisco, 2000).

No. 1, she says, is essential fatty acids. The most important for skin is gamma linolenic acid (GLA), found in borage oil, black currant seed oil, and evening primrose. "Roughly 33 percent of all adults are deficient in GLA, which supports the skin cell membranes," she says. "It's been shown to be an effective treatment for inflammation and

moisture loss associated with dry skin and aging, and a potent anti-inflammatory. Studies have shown that borage oil applied topically has a very dramatic healing effect on eczema, psoriasis, and contact dermatitis."

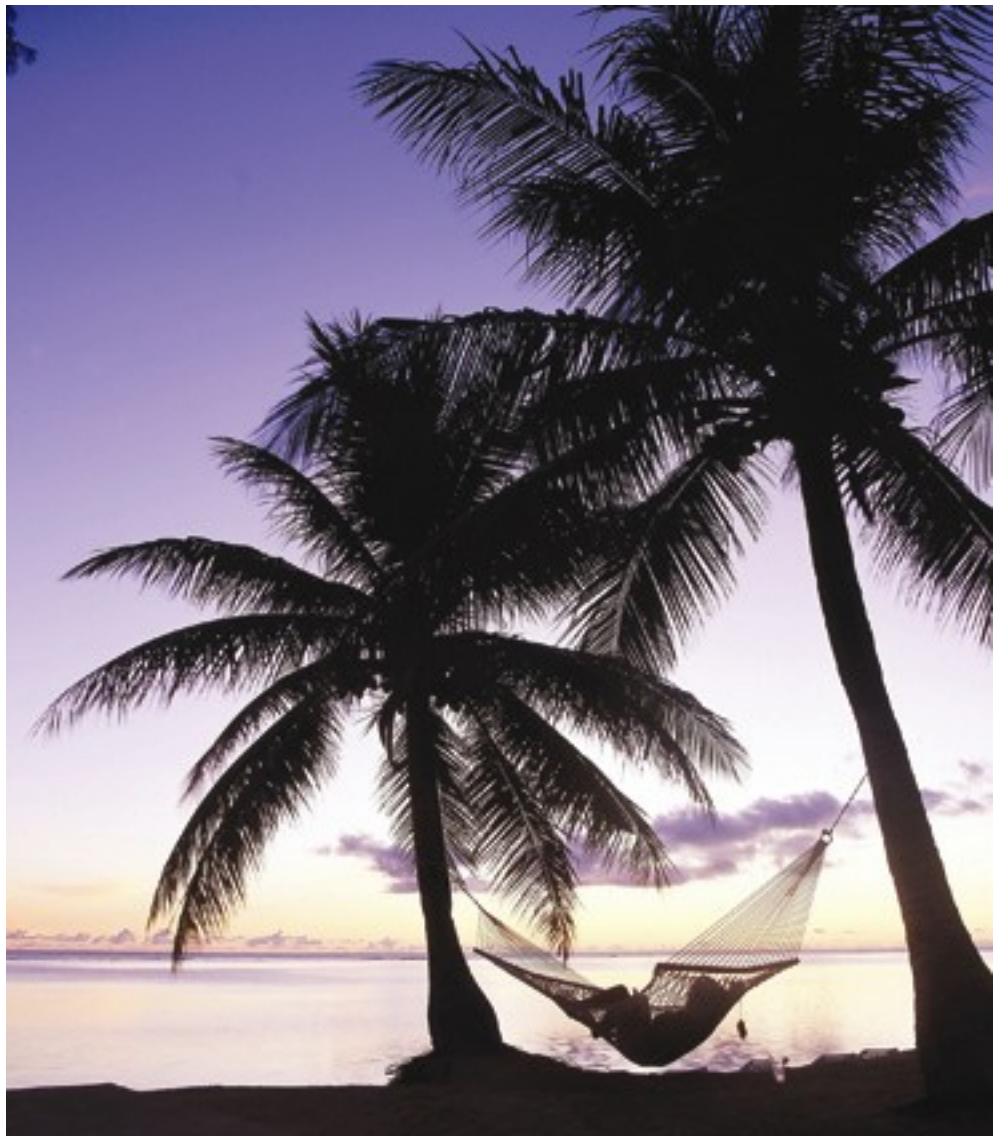
So, apply it topically or take it internally? How about both? "I love the concept of beauty inside and out," Gittleman says. That is to say, apply and consume it. As for internal consumption, Gittleman recommends a daily, high-quality GLA supplement of 500 mg.

Internal organs also need support in times of stress, particularly the adrenal system. "Pantothenic acid, a B vitamin, is the best support for the adrenals," she says. "It balances out the cortisol." Gittleman's recommendation: 500 mg, three times a day.

For those under maximum stress loads, Gittleman suggests an adrenal support supplement that includes zinc, tyrosine, and vitamin B6, three tablets in the morning and three more before 4 p.m. (But always check specific dosage directions, and confer with a healthcare practitioner for the most appropriate remedy and dosage.)

She also notes that when stressed, the body tends to secrete magnesium, and recommends 400 mg in the morning and 400 mg right before bed. "That can help with sleep," she says. (For more information, visit Gittleman's website, [www.fatflush.com](http://www.fatflush.com).)

Stress can wreak havoc with your complexion and be the obstacle standing in the way of clear skin. Addressing this root cause can be pivotal in achieving clarity--on your face and in your soul.



Relaxation can help dissipate stress hormones that contribute to wrinkles and a dull skin tone.

# Prevent the Afternoon Slump

## Some Tips for P.M. Energy

*Jerry V. Teplitz*

If you're like most people, you've experienced the afternoon slump. You know the feeling -- it's only 2 p.m., yet you feel drained. Fortunately, you can employ methods to reduce the slump's frequency and shorten its duration.

### **DRINK WATER.**

Your body uses water even if you're not exercising. If you wait until you feel thirsty, you're already dehydrated. Keep a water bottle handy all day.

### **AVOID SUGAR AND SIMPLE CARBOHYDRATES.**

While a mid-afternoon candy bar may give you a quick rush, it actually worsens the slump. Instead, choose protein-rich foods and complex carbs.

### **EAT SMALL MEALS.**

Have six small meals over the course of the day instead of three large ones. Big meals cause the digestive process to divert blood from your brain to use in the digestive track.

### **EVALUATE YOUR LIGHTING.**

Most offices are lit with cool, white

fluorescent tubes, which have a terrible effect on how people feel and function at work. A better option is full-spectrum, fluorescent tubes.

### **TAKE TIME FOR WALKS.**

Walking gets your blood circulating, helps you breathe better, and stimulates your brain due to the increased blood flow. Take a 5- or 10-minute walk during the day.

### **MEDITATE.**

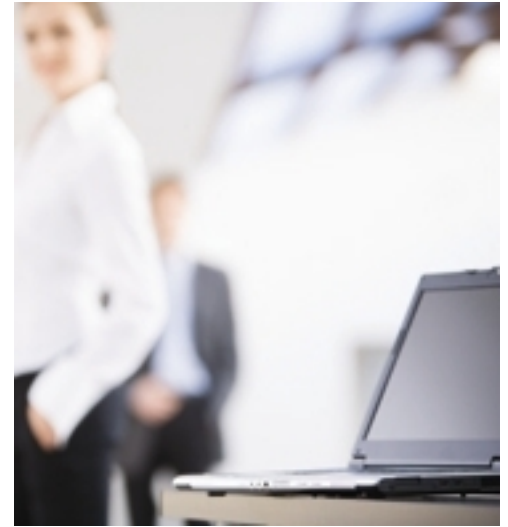
Meditation is great for rejuvenating your body. By meditating for 15 to 20 minutes twice a day, you're keeping your body continually energized and rested.

### **TAKE TIME TO BREATHE AND STRETCH.**

Deep breathing exercises give you an energy boost. Also, stand up and stretch to increase blood flow and stimulate the lymphatic system.

### **HANDLE NEGATIVITY.**

Negative people and images can have a draining effect on your energy. Make a conscious effort to stay positive.



**Avoid the drain office settings can bring on.**

# The Scoop on Meditation

## A Simple Practice with Profound Benefits

People who meditate regularly appear internally and externally five to 10 years younger than their non-meditating peers, according to author Deepak Chopra. That's good news for the estimated 10 million people who practice meditation on an ongoing basis and experience the resulting calm it cultivates.

The rich benefits come from doing something that looks like nothing: Sitting still, being quiet, and breathing deeply. Meditation works simply but profoundly by defusing the onslaughts of life -- a racing mind, busyness, deadlines, commutes, all of which have physiological effects on well-being. Meditation calms the nervous system, decreases metabolic rate, heart rate, and

blood pressure, and lowers levels of cholesterol, stress hormones, and free radicals. It also has a direct effect on breathing, slowing and deepening respiration so more oxygen circulates throughout the body. Not only that, meditation is said to lessen feelings of anxiety and depression and improve memory and concentration. And all of this culminates in slowing the aging process, as Chopra notes.

There are many meditation techniques, including focusing on a mantra, a sacred word or phrase, or your breath. But the basic intent of all meditation is focus and attention. And it doesn't take hours a day in an ashram to meditate effectively. Benefits kick in with even a short period of devoted time.

How to begin? Wear comfortable, unrestrictive clothes, sit on a cushion or chair with your back straight (think once again, comfort), rest your hands on your legs, let your eyes go soft and out of focus or close them, breathe slowly and deeply, and -- the hardest part -- attempt to empty your mind of thoughts and quiet the internal dialogue. When thoughts flit through your mind, let them pass without judging them and come back to your focus (your mantra, counting, etc.) and breathing.

Start with this sitting meditation technique for five minutes a day, and add on time as you get more at ease with the process. For more information on techniques and benefits, check out [www.abc-of-meditation.com](http://www.abc-of-meditation.com).

*She was a  
beauty in her  
youth, a fact  
which she alone  
remembers.*

-Benjamin Constant

Superficial chemical peels by PCA Skin Clinical Care Products will effectively help to reduce the depth of surface lines, improve skin's texture, help fade brown spots and assist in clearing acne/blemished skin. These formulations incorporate naturally-occurring fruit acids (Alpha Hydroxy Acids) with strengthening and brightening ingredients that will help exfoliate surface dead skin cells and improve overall skin health. Removing this top dull layer allows healthier cells to come to the surface, improving your skin's health, texture and appearance.

These types of treatments stimulate collagen and elastin production in the skin, which helps to reduce sagging and wrinkling and visible signs of aging.

PCA Professional treatments are designed to give visible results. They are especially effective for the treatment of acne, rosacea, sun damage, fine lines and wrinkles, menopausal and unevenly pigmented skin. PCA treatments are safe to repeat on a monthly basis, and are affordable as well. Additionally, there is no "down time", so you can immediately return to your normal routine.

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MEMBER

