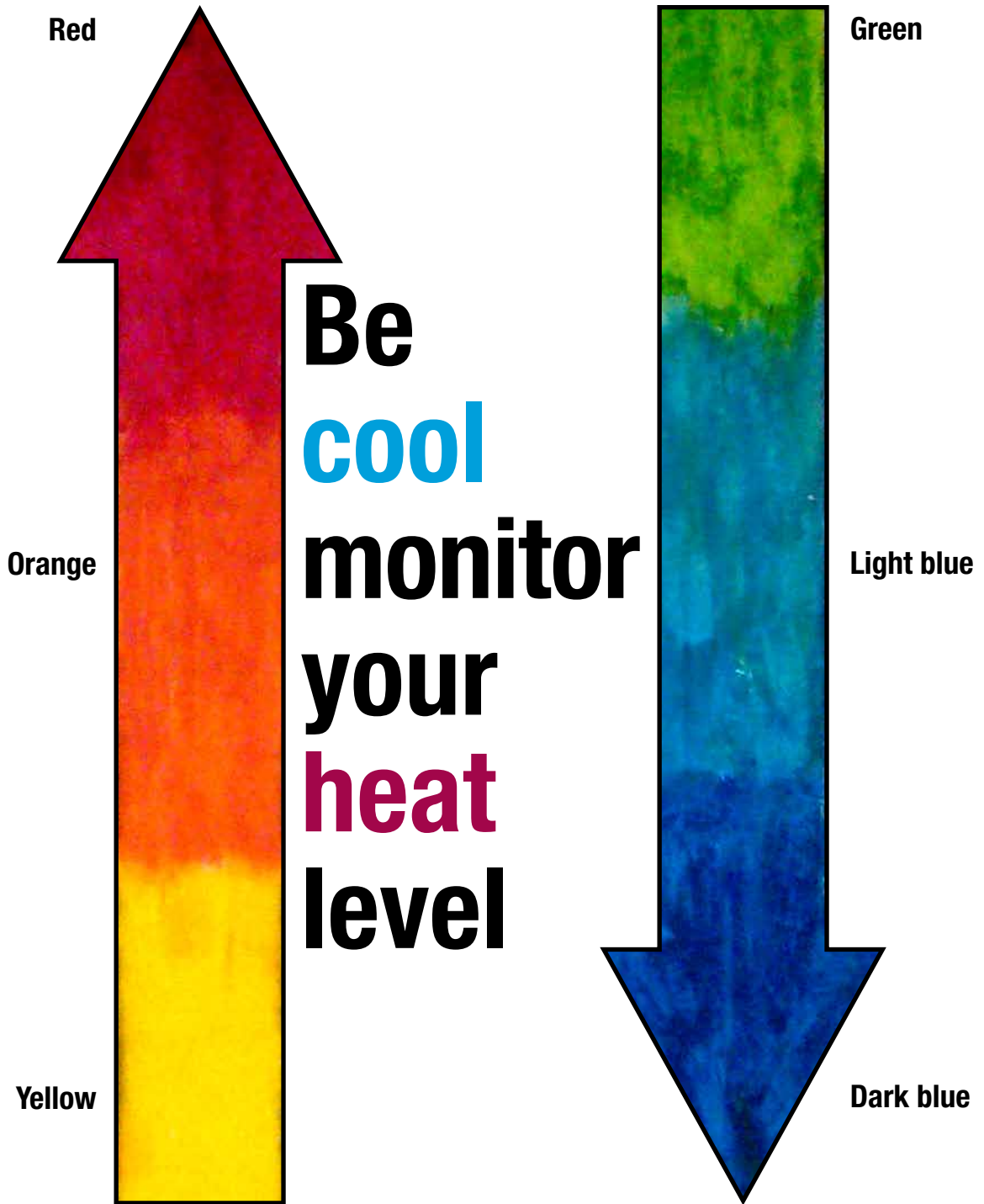


Anthony Rao, Ph.D.
Paul Napper, Psy.D.
Authors, The Power of Agency

Checklist: Signs of Overstress

- Lack of concentration
- Constantly taking work home
- Memory loss
- Poor decision making
- Poor work quality
- Inconsistency
- Not meeting targets or deadlines
- Irregular attendance and time keeping
- Poor long-term planning
- Accidents
- Clients complaints
- Bad mistakes
- Ineffective problem solving
- Lower standards accepted
- Regularly working late
- Unreasonable complaints
- Tiredness
- Uncooperative relationships
- Worry, anxiety, or fear shown
- Depression
- Emotional outbursts
- Frequent criticism, gossip, or backbiting
- Unpredictability
- Low self-esteem
- Easily disgruntled
- Extreme mood swings
- Overly self-critical
- Only concern shown is for self
- Eating difficulties
- Greater use of alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, drugs
- No sense of humor
- Difficulties with sleep
- Confusion
- Low interest in work
- No one want to work with person
- Physical illness

Reactivity Color Zone



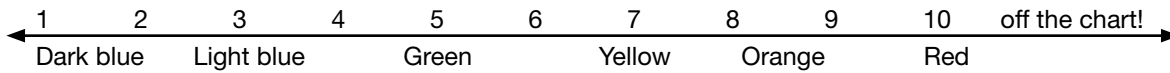
Evaluate Your Heat Level...

*less
intense*

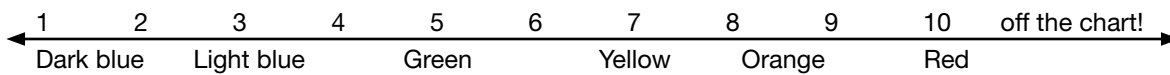
*more
intense*



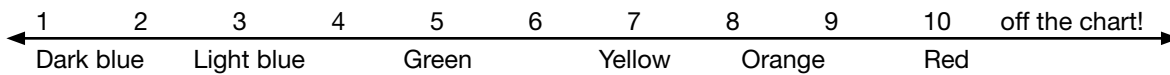
Monday



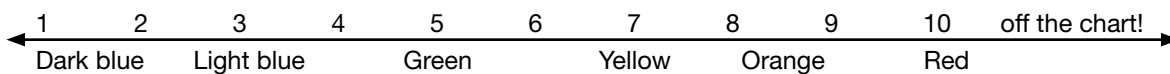
Tuesday



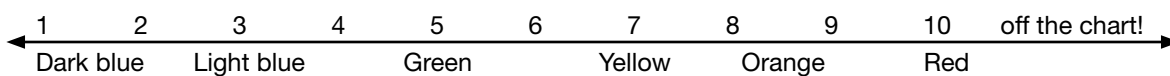
Wednesday



Thursday



Friday



Comments:

MEDITATION (TIPS)

(Adapted from multiple sources)

Drs. Rao & Napper: Authors, *The Power of Agency*

1. Sit or lie down on your back on a comfortable surface. If you lie down, place cushions behind your shoulders and head so you are not lying completely flat (this may help prevent you from falling asleep during the meditation). Knees bent is relaxing. Shoulders back if sitting (watch your posture)!

2. Meditate in the same place every day. We are creatures of habit, and your body will begin to expect to relax if you meditate in the same place at roughly the same time.

3. Do your meditation at the same time every day, preferably attaching this routine to one that is already in place (e.g., at bedtime, after you wake). Trying to “fit in” your meditation at different times during the day will make it virtually impossible for it to become a habit.

4. No interruptions during meditation! Close the door, put up a “Do Not Disturb” sign, turn off all technology (except what you are using for your script). Listen to your script with headphones or earbuds and/or use a sleep mask if helpful.

5. Begin your diaphragmatic breathing before you start the meditation, and continue breathing deeply *all the way through* the script. This deepened breath is crucial to changing your body chemistry and reducing anxiety/stress. Perhaps try the 4-7-8 technique to get you started.

6. Passively ignore intrusive thoughts, and bring your mind back to listening to the script. It is quite normal for thoughts to come and go as you listen to your meditation script. Simply notice that your mind has wandered. Let them pass through like watching trains going by.

7. Use the same script for at least two weeks. If you become bored after that time, then choose a new script, but give it a fair chance. Time on digital devices makes it hard to slow our thinking.

8. Scripts should be about 10+ minutes long for younger meditators (7-14 years old).
Scripts should be about 15-20+ minutes long for older meditators (15 years on up).

MEDITATION Examples

Drs. Rao & Napper: Authors, *The Power of Agency*

Meditation can change your life. Research shows significantly improved physical and mental well-being when we practice these techniques regularly.

It's important to select the meditation experience that's the best fit for you. Below are a few examples from the hundreds of meditation scripts and meditative sounds/music available online. We don't endorse any particular one, or the people who produced these, but they are a good starting point to find what works for you.

How to choose: Try out several. Listen to each for few minutes and ask, *Which one of these calms me? Which helps me to breathe slowly? Which helps me to keep worries or distracting thoughts out of my mind, if even for a few seconds?*

How to listen: After you choose one, download it (if you can't download, keep the link handy). Listen to it everyday for at least two weeks for 20-30 minutes. Make this a priority. Set time aside each day to practice meditation. Headphones that block out extraneous noise are very helpful. Sitting comfortably, or if possible, lying down works best. Knees bent with a pillow or cushion under them is even more relaxing. Find a place with a low level of stimulation, low light, a quiet and private spot where you will not be interrupted. We recommend closing your eyes to help you get the best results.

CLASSIC

Example #1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlsQgzNghCU#action=share>

Description: This is a classic meditation script. It's a good length at 22 minutes long and it starts with a deep breathing exercise. It then guides you through *Progressive Muscle Relaxation* (a technique of letting go of the tension in your muscles one by one). That's followed by another technique called *guided imagery*, where you imagine pleasant images, places, and experiences that calm and inspire you. There are self-affirmations and a "mantra" in this recording as well. Mantras are positive (and calming) single words or phrases you repeat silently. They become connected with the relaxed meditative state, and can be called upon quickly to help calm you at other times of the day when you are feeling stressed.

MYSTICAL-SPIRITUAL

Example #2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=74&v=6QV6QNb0d40

Description: There are mystical and spiritual elements to this recording, but with a modern twist. Native American chants are combined with upbeat instrumentals. This type of meditation can feel quite invigorating – it may encourage your mind to think in new ways and promote creativity. It isn't a classic meditation protocol, but for some people, it may work well.

BINAURAL BEAT MEDITATION

Example #3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pHI5MIDgps>

Description: For people who seek a longer, deeper meditative experience, this of recording works well. There are no words or uplifting beats, but instead, pleasant slow wave-like sounds that repeat. This particular example incorporates a binaural beat. According to a [Psychology Today](#) article, “binaural beats are a technique of combining two slightly different sound frequencies to create the perception of a single new frequency tone.” These meditative sounds are also used to help improve the quality of sleep.

Psychology Today Article on binaural beats can be found here:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sleep-newzzz/201810/how-can-binaural-beats-help-you-sleep-better>

ALTERNATIVE - ECLECTIC

Example #4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPFMha31BYY>

Description: This type offers a variety of sounds, beat patterns, and syncopations. It can be described as *Old School Hip Hop Beat/Rap Instrumental Meditation*. While this may not fit the classic meditation protocol (in fact it may invigorate and stimulate your mental state) some people report a meditative, mindful experience.

Ideas for Self-Care

- PHYSICAL**
- Eat and drink regularly
 - Exercise
 - Sleep well
 - Take vacations
 - Get regular medical care

- EMOTIONAL**
- Increase self-awareness and label your emotions
 - Find a healthy outlet for your emotions
 - Listen to your thoughts

- PROFESSIONAL**
- Take a break during the day
 - Have lunch away from your desk
 - Seek supervision/consultation
 - Set limits with clients
 - Set limits with colleagues
 - Solve little problems
 - Be realistic and flexible
 - Be aware of your limitations

- SPIRITUAL**
- Find meaning in things
 - Pray/meditate

- SOCIAL**
- Spend time with friends and family
 - Stay connected with others
 - Participate in your community
 - Become part of a team sport/activity
 - Seek out positive people
 - Learn to ask for help

- PSYCHOLOGICAL**
- Seek a balanced life with work, friends, family, play, and rest
 - Make time for self-reflection
 - Engage in relaxing activities
 - Adopt a positive attitude

Taking Care of Yourself

During this time, you and your colleagues may be experiencing different reactions. There are several ways you can find balance, be aware of your needs, and make connections. Use this list to help you decide which self-care strategies will work for you.

- Practice brief relaxation techniques during the workday
- Check in with other colleagues
- Prepare for worldview changes that may not be mirrored by others in your life
- Increase leisure activities, stress management, and exercise
- Pay extra attention to health and nutrition
- Self-monitor and pace your efforts
- Maintain boundaries: delegate, say no, and avoid getting overloaded with work
- Pay extra attention to rekindling close interpersonal relationships
- Practice good sleep routines
- Make time for self-reflection
- Find things that you enjoy or make you laugh
- Participate in formal help if extreme stress persists for greater than two to three weeks
- Increase experiences that have spiritual or philosophical meaning to you
- Keep a journal to get worries off your mind
- Access support from colleagues routinely by sharing concerns, identifying difficult experiences and strategizing to solve problems
- Stay aware of limitations and needs
- Recognize when one is Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired (HALT), and taking the appropriate self-care measures
- Increase activities that are positive
- Practice religious faith, philosophy, spirituality
- Spend time with family and friends
- Learn how to “put stress away”
- Write, draw, paint
- Limit caffeine and substance use

Think of self-care as having three basic aspects:

Awareness	The first step is to seek awareness. This requires you to slow down and focus inwardly to determine how you are feeling, what your stress level is, what types of thoughts are going through your head, and whether your behaviors and actions are consistent with the who you want to be.
Balance	The second step is to seek balance in all areas of your life including work, personal and family life, rest, and leisure. You will be more productive when you’ve had opportunities to rest and relax. Becoming aware of when you are losing balance in your life gives you an opportunity to change.
Connection	The final step is connection. It involves building connections and supportive relationships with your co-workers, students, friends, family, and community. One of the most powerful stress reducers is social connection.