

The Stress Reduction Program at Island Health & Fitness in Partnership with Cayuga Medical Center

What Is the Stress Reduction Program?

The Stress Reduction Program is an 8-week course that instructs participants in mindfulness meditation and stress reduction practices. The course is based on the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program developed by Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in 1979. This program's effectiveness has been verified by extensive research, and it is the most widely replicated stress reduction program in the world.

What Happens in an 8-Week Class?

Course participants learn and practice mindfulness meditation and stress reduction techniques in a supportive group environment. Mindfulness is our innate ability to be aware of what is happening in the present moment. In contrast to mindlessness, or reacting on “autopilot,” mindfulness enables us to more consciously choose our responses during stressful situations. By cultivating mindfulness through regular practice, we experience relaxation and become more aware of creative ways we can respond to the challenges in our lives.

At home, participants practice the meditation practices daily, both formally, using audio recordings, and informally, by bringing greater awareness into daily life. The formal meditation practices that are instructed include body scanning, sitting, and walking meditation, and gentle yoga.

How Does Stress Reduction Help?

According to over two decades of published research, people who completed an eight-week stress reduction program experienced positive results including:

- Reduced pain levels
- Reduced levels of anxiety and depression
- Increased ability to relax
- Increased resilience to both short-term and long-term stress
- Increased self-esteem
- Increased ability to act effectively under high levels of stress
- Increased sense of ability to positively influence one's own health

An overview of this research can be found at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center's website: <http://www.umassmed.edu/Content.aspx?id=42426>

Who Should Take This Class?

The Stress Reduction Program has helped people facing stress related to work, school, relationships, parenting, grief, sleep, time, food, and the sense of being out-of-balance. The program has also helped individuals address a variety of physical and psychological health issues, including cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, headaches, chronic pain, fibromyalgia, fatigue, sleep disturbance, depression, anxiety, and mood disorders. The practices taught are useful and beneficial for anyone.

Stress Reduction Program Graduates Have Said

“The techniques I learned, particularly meditation, have proven so powerful and helpful.”

“I became aware that when I was acting on impulse, I could stop and not just react. It changed my life.”

“One of the best gifts I’ve ever received... Real tools for a healthy, vibrant, mindful life.”

“I never thought once I started living in constant pain that I would ever be able to have peace of mind and enjoy life again. Thank you for proving me wrong.”

“This is the first time I have been relatively pain-free in five years.”

“The problems and issues haven't gone away, but the way I choose to handle them has changed... I feel so much more positive about this life.”

About the Instructor

Nick Boyar has taught Stress Reduction at Island Health & Fitness since 2007. He is certified as a teacher of meditation and yoga, by the Integral Yoga Academy in Buckingham, Virginia. He is also an Integral Life Coach, certified by Integral Coaching Canada, who designs and guides personal growth programs for individuals. He holds a Masters Degree in Teaching from Binghamton University. He lives in Ithaca, where he was born and raised, with his wife and son, and a dog and two cats.

Registration

The Stress Reduction Program meets for eight consecutive weekly two-hour sessions. The course currently meets Tuesday evenings, from 6:30 – 8:30pm. New 8-week sessions begin regularly. Please contact the instructor for more information on the next start date. The cost of the program is \$360, which is an average of \$45 per two-hour session. This fee includes a set of compact discs and other supporting materials. Sliding scale and extended payment options are available in cases of need. A deposit check of \$90 payable to Nick Boyar, and mailed to 175 Calkins Road, Ithaca, NY 14850, secures a space in the program. Receipt of deposit will be confirmed by email or phone. The balance of payment is due at the second class of the series.

To register or obtain further information, please call or email Nick Boyar at 607-272-2062 or nickboyar1@yahoo.com