April Wellness Action Message

Quarterly Theme: Mental Health
April Message: The Power of Breathing & Meditation

Take Action: Learn how breathing and meditation can help to reduce stress and explore all that Self Care by AbleTo has to offer to help your mental health.

How calm, steady breathing can help

Uncontrolled, chronic stress can have a devastating effect on health. It's linked with a number of chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and heart disease, but also anxiety, muscle aches and pains, poor sleep and memory issues.

Simply observing your breath can help reduce stress and open the door to a more mindful lifestyle. Deep breathing simulates the vagus nerve which actives the parasympathetic (the rest and digest) nervous system. You may feel an immediate sense of relaxation by simply pausing and taking some long deep breaths.

Breathing is a form of "entry level" meditation and anyone can do it. The basics of meditation are pretty simple. Find a quiet spot, settle in, and focus on your breathing. Let your thoughts come and go. It's OK if you get impatient or caught up in your thoughts. Just start over again and refocus on your breathing.

At first, try to meditate for one minute. Then try for two minutes and gradually increase how long you spend at it. You can also experiment with different approaches. Sit in a chair, stand, or lie down. The Media library in [My Health Rewards](#) includes various breathing technique videos. You can learn new techniques and earn points toward rewards at the same time. Each video is 50 points to a 200 point maximum a month.

Whatever approach you take, you'll start to improve — and maybe start to see some of those health benefits along the way.

Reduce stress with Self Care by AbleTo

Ease symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression with the Self Care by AbleTo mobile app. From coping tools to meditations to Guided Journeys, you'll get help to manage your moods and thoughts so you can understand what works for you to feel better. Learn more:
You and your covered dependents (ages 13 and up) have access to the app's premium version at no additional cost. Learn more: [Self Care by AbleTo](#).

Steps to get started:
1. Visit AbleTo.com/Begin and tap "Get started."
2. When asked for your access code, enter Medica. You'll answer a few questions that help us learn more about you and your goals.
3. Set up your account and download the AbleTo app from the App Store or on Google Play.
4. Open the app and select "Log In" to begin your journey.

Additional resources at your fingertips

[Wellness Programs | Duluth Joint Powers Enterprise](#)

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