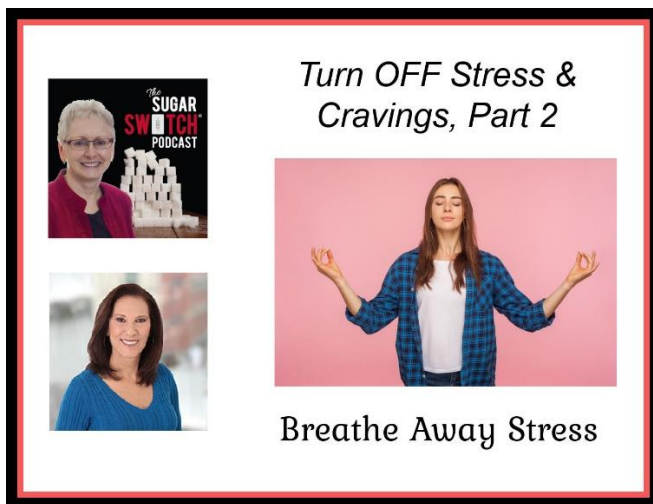


TRANSCRIPTS

Turn OFF Stress & Cravings

An Exclusive Mini-Series created by Stress Management Coach, Wendy Padob for
The Sugar Switch® Podcast



Cathy Ormon of *The Sugar Switch® Podcast* interviews Wendy Padob, CEO/Founder of WP Creative Wellness and National Board-Certified Health & Wellness Coach

Welcome to Part 2 of the mini-series Turning OFF Stress and Cravings. Today we are going to talk about how you can Breathe Away Stress, specifically using deep breathing.

In Part 1, we talked about the ‘rest and digest’ parasympathetic system, the biological opposite of the ‘fight or flight’ sympathetic system. We discussed how being aware of your stress reaction and cravings can help you to take better control over your emotions and food choices. And we included some self-care tips on how you can activate the ‘rest and digest’ response.

In this episode, we are going to talk more about breathing and also discuss some deep breathing techniques. All content in this podcast is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Do not practice any exercises discussed while driving, operating heavy equipment or if you are short of breath. Always consult your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

My special Guest once again is Wendy Padob. Wendy joins me for this mini-series, to share enlightening information and tools for turning off stress and cravings now, and in the future.

Wendy is a national board-certified health and wellness coach who specializes in stress management. She is CEO/founder of WP Creative Wellness at www.wpcreativewellness.com , a private coaching practice in New York City. Living and working at the former epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, Wendy is uniquely equipped to confront extreme stress.

Before she became a coach, Wendy spent over 25 years in the corporate world as a successful communications executive and writer where she experienced first-hand how stress can take its toll. She has been through her own health journey, overcome multiple repetitive stress injuries, rebounded from disability, and is deeply committed to helping others triumph over chronic stress.

Wendy believes we can make the most of stressful times, including pandemics, by learning resiliency skills for bouncing back from physical, mental and emotional setbacks including stress eating, which can lead to obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, depression and other major stress-related conditions.

Cathy: Welcome back, Wendy! I am so glad to have you here with me for Part 2 in this mini-series about Turning OFF Stress and Cravings. I am really excited about the series because it is so timely and valuable with what's happening for people right now, and it is such helpful information!

Wendy: Yes, given all the uncertainty we face daily, this mini-series can really help listeners gain control over stress and build new resilience in trying times. I'm especially excited about today's episode which focuses on an amazing skill you were born with that you can draw on any time to turn off unhealthy stress and food cravings.

Cathy: Let's get right into our topic: breathing away stress! There are numerous strategies for turning off stress, and in the various conversations you and I have had - you refer to ONE in particular that is one of the most powerful of them all. That ONE is your breath. Why is that?

Wendy: Well, you need oxygen to live, to get energy to fuel your body - and 90% of your energy comes from your breath! When you breathe in, you bring oxygen into every cell, and when you breathe out you remove waste or carbon dioxide from your blood. It's called a gas exchange. With every deep breath, you increase the amount of oxygen that gets into your body and carbon dioxide leaving it - and that extra oxygen in your blood does wonders for your body and mind! It allows nutrients and vitamins to be absorbed more efficiently, it slows your heartbeat, it lowers or stabilizes your blood pressure and it reduces stress. Simply put, your breath is one of your best defenses against daily stress!

Cathy: Let's start with the foundational question: What exactly is deep breathing? And how does it help reduce stress?

Wendy: Deep breathing, which is also called belly breathing, abdominal breathing and diaphragmatic breathing - is the basis for almost all meditation and relaxation techniques. As I mentioned, it is a natural skill we all possess. It can lie dormant, but once we reawaken it and control it, we can tap into one of our body's strongest self-healing powers!

For centuries, people from every culture have been drawn to the practice of breath awareness. Yogis have used breath control, or pranayama, to increase concentration and improve vitality. And science has proven the benefits of this ancient practice are real! Besides reducing stress, increasing alertness and boosting your immune system, deep breathing is also extremely practical – and why opera singers, actors as well as meditators and respiratory therapists use it regularly to reduce tension and improve lung efficiency.

Cathy: Can you elaborate on the benefits of deep breathing, as compared to ordinary breathing?

Wendy: Sure. There are so many physical, mental and emotional benefits you get from deep breathing. Research has shown it can help:

- Detoxify and cleanse your body.
- Improve your immunity and respiratory health.
- Boost endorphins, those "feel good" neurochemicals that relieve pain and give you a sense of wellbeing.
- Increase your energy, your alertness and stamina.
- Support correct posture –with each deep breath, you simultaneously lengthen and straighten your spine.
- Improve your digestion –when you breathe deeply, you produce healthier blood flow which makes your organs function more effectively, including your intestines.
- Improve your heart function and circulation –like aerobic exercise, deep breathing can strengthen your heart muscle, slow your heart rate and lower your blood pressure.
- Reduce symptoms of insomnia –when your heart rate slows, it can make it easier for you to drift off to sleep.
- Build your resilience to anxiety and reduce symptoms of depression, attention deficit disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. In fact, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends deep breathing as a healthy way to cope with stress and get stronger, especially during a public health crisis like Covid-19.

Cathy: Well, that IS an amazing list of benefits just for breathing deeply! Tell us a little bit about the science behind deep breathing.

Wendy: You can think of deep breathing as a natural tranquilizer for your nervous system! It turns OFF your stress response – the ‘fight or flight’ sympathetic nervous system – that increases your susceptibility to colds and some of the worst stress-related illnesses like type 1 diabetes, hypertension, autoimmune disease, infertility, heart disease and osteoporosis. And it turns ON your ‘rest and digest’ response – the parasympathetic nervous system – that regenerates cells and increases your immune strength...slowing and calming down your body which allows your heart rate and blood pressure to decrease and tension in your muscles to relax.

Taking deep breaths also encourages air into the pockets of your lungs which if not used, can close and put you at risk for infection. So, breathing exercises can make your lungs more efficient as well as reduce tension and relieve stress. And the best part is that you don't need any special tools or equipment to do it – just your lungs, some air and a comfortable, quiet place to sit or lie down where you won't be disturbed!

Cathy: Are there special techniques that people have to learn in order to get the full benefits that deep breathing can provide?

Cathy: Well, there are literally thousands of breathing exercises. And as a stress management coach, I guide my clients in practicing the most effective ones that are ‘evidence-based.’ In other words, those techniques widely researched and time-tested, so they can feel confident choosing what works best for them.

To make the most of your cleansing breaths, it's good to master some basic skills so you can get comfortable with deep breathing. And today, we're going to discuss 3 exercises:

1. Awareness of Breath
2. Deep vs. Shallow Breathing
3. Visualizing

Though simple, each takes practice. So, be patient and do these exercises when you are not distracted or driving.

1.Awareness of Breath

This exercise will help you practice just being aware of your breath and can be done daily as a form of meditation. It involves just watching your breath and observing its flow.

- After listening to this podcast, find a quiet place to sit or lie down where you won't be disturbed.
- If you're sitting, keep your back straight and your feet flat on the floor.
- Close your eyes, if that feels comfortable to you.
- Breathe in calmly through your nose, then slowly out through your mouth with your lips slightly parted.

- Watch the rise and fall of your breath; the feeling of the breath coming and going through your nostrils.
- There is no right or wrong way to practice.
- If your mind wanders gently bring it back to your breath.
- Do this for a few minutes. Becoming aware of your own breath is the first step in developing mindfulness.

2. Deep vs. Shallow Breathing

Many people don't realize they breathe from their chest instead of their abdomen.

- An easy way to make sure you are doing breathing deeply is to place one hand on your belly just below your ribs, and one on your chest.
- When you take a deep breath, the hand on your belly should rise up while the hand on your chest should not move much at all.
- Do this several times, slowly.
- If you find it challenging or you get distracted, just remember it's a normal part of the process, and gently bring yourself back to the present moment without any judgment. Just keep practicing.
- When you do this exercise regularly, you will start taking longer and deeper breaths without even thinking about it!

3. Visualizing

After you establish a calming, breathing rhythm, you can add some images.

Visualizing is a third skill.

- So, as you inhale, imagine the air you are breathing spreads relaxation and calmness throughout your body.
- And, as you exhale, imagine you are breathing away stress and tension.
- Do this several times, slowly.

Cathy: Do you have any tips for our listeners about how to use deep breathing in specific situations? I am thinking of times when a person might be stressed from dealing with insomnia or maybe going into a potentially stressful situation, like a doctor's visit - those kinds of situations.

Wendy: Oh, yes - absolutely! If you feel anxious going to the doctor or dentist (and who doesn't, actually), focusing on your breath will ease your nerves. Taking slow, deep and gentle breaths in the waiting room before a test or a procedure, for example, can relax and calm you down in minutes.

And, if you are a restless sleeper, breathing exercises are great to do before bed to unwind your mind and body, making it more likely you will slip into a deeper sleep. If you have trouble staying asleep or wake up during the night, 5-10 minutes of deep breathing can help you drift back to sleep more easily.

Deep breathing can also help you handle anxiety before taking an exam, giving a speech or managing fear or worry about situations beyond your control – like traveling, returning to work or school, or even wearing a face mask during the pandemic.

Cathy: Sounds like deep breathing can come to your rescue in so many stressful situations! Any quick practical tips for reinforcing the practice?

Wendy: Yes, the more you incorporate deep breathing into your daily life, the more resilience you can build to deal with life's everyday stressors and turn off negative effects of stress, which include stress eating and cravings for sugar and junk food.

Fortunately, there are many breathing and mindfulness apps as well as videos that can help you strengthen your skills so you can 'keep calm and carry on,' especially during a pandemic. Most of them are affordable, easy to download to your smartphone or computer, and often include music, nature sounds, and lessons plus daily reminders to focus on your breathing, stay centered and grounded in the present moment.

Other practical tips for reinforcing your breathing include scheduling specific times to practice. Doing deep breathing 3 times a day, at 9am, noon and 9pm for instance, will tell your brain to relax consistently, so when you encounter stress, you'll be able to handle it more efficiently. But don't wait for a crisis! Intense anxiety can turn into a panic attack and lead to depression and other stress-related illnesses we have discussed. So, set a goal to make breathing a part of your normal daily routine.

Cathy: It's always good to have personal guidance to make sure you are doing the breathing techniques correctly.

Wendy: Yes, personal guidance can help you build confidence in your breathing skills, whether you're just starting out or have been practicing awhile on your own. Breathing is really the foundation for all mindfulness, relaxation and meditation techniques. And that's why I've put together a special *Breathe Away Stress* coaching package to make it even easier and more affordable, for anyone, at any level, to learn or improve their skills.

Cathy: This Episode has been wonderfully informative! You have given listeners a great tool to use to bring down their stress level, which will help in many areas of their life - including reducing the tendency to head towards comfort foods and sugar. Can you tell us more about how your *Breathe Away Stress* program works?

Wendy: Yes, it consists of four private *Breathe Away Stress* coaching sessions, including guided scripts and videos that make breathing and mind/body relaxation even easier to practice. AND as a special thank-you, I'm offering the program to listeners at a podcast discount for a limited time.

Be sure to contact me, Wendy, at www.wpcreativewellness.com as soon as possible, as my coaching slots are going fast. Remember to mention the word 'PODCAST' in your email or phone call to take advantage of these special savings on your coaching package.

Cathy: Thank you so much, Wendy, for being here today. I certainly appreciate you sharing your expertise with me and with the listeners. It's incredibly valuable information and your coaching program can be a real game changer in helping listeners turn off their stress and cravings even faster.

The coaching package is called *Breathe Away Stress*, which Wendy is offering to listeners at a podcast discount for a limited time. All you have to do is contact Wendy at www.wpcreativewellness.com, and be sure to mention the word PODCAST to get the savings on this package. Be sure to contact Wendy as soon as possible to get a spot in her busy schedule.

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