

## Relaxation Therapy to Control Blood Glucose Levels

Stress is something most people experience at some point in our lives. During times of stress, those people who have Type 2 diabetes have a harder time keeping their blood glucose at the right level. This cycle of stress, not properly managing your diabetes, and the resulting poor health can impact your quality of life and cause life-threatening complications. A combination of high stress and diabetes can lead to blindness, kidney disease, cardiovascular problems, and require limb amputation.

Maintaining a healthy quality of life requires managing your stress level. There are many methods used to decrease stress. Some people will use prayer, exercise, meditation, and breathing techniques to decrease stress. Another form of therapy is biofeedback. Biofeedback measures the stress levels in the body through monitoring body temperature and muscle tenseness. This helps a person recognize the symptoms of stress and deal with it at that time. Recently there have been studies aiming to discover whether biofeedback could be paired with relaxation techniques to lower a diabetic's blood glucose levels.

It is medically-accepted that patients who have excess stress also have problems controlling their blood sugar levels. They are often unable to control their eating habits or maintain an exercise regimen due stress. Uncontrollable blood glucose levels, then sickness, and acute complications often result. By using relaxation techniques in conjunction with biofeedback to recognize the signs of stress, patients have been able to alter their stress responses.

This has the added benefit of helping to control glucose levels. When a person experiences stress, the body releases a chemical called cortisol. That chemical decreases the ability of the body to properly absorb insulin. Patients who were merely educated about their stress did not as effectively control their glucose levels as the patients who had also undergone biofeedback and relaxation therapy. Studies found that those who learned relaxation therapy and biofeedback also had lowered muscle tension, depression, and anxiety.

This is one more good reason to control our stress. Do you recognize your body's stress signals? Do feel tightening in your shoulder and neck muscles? You may find that you have a hard time inhaling deeply. Perhaps you clench your teeth, or constantly feel hot. Whenever your body tells you that it is stressed, you need to heed the signs and begin relaxation techniques.

Most people know what stress can do to our bodies as well as our mental health. One of the best ways to release stress is to exercise. Exercise has many benefits. Exercise helps you lose weight, lowers your blood glucose levels, and reduces stress-related feelings. If you are suffering from work-related stress, try standing up from your desk, or taking a short walk. Your over-all physical and mental health will greatly benefit from exercise. Using relaxation techniques will help decrease your risk of stress-related complications. Exercise is merely one way to relax. Other methods to help release tension and stress from your body include listening to music, breathing exercises, praying or meditating.