

Cooking as a mental therapy to relieve stress

[Science](#), [Biology](#)



In a fast changing world where the number of people that experience stress, tension and anxiety continue to increase, the modern day lifestyle can be blamed for the continuous rise in stress levels. While there are different techniques used for the effective management of stress, one foremost technique most people tend to overlook is the nature's gift of using cooking as a stress reliever. Although there are quite a lot of people that dread entering the kitchen, cooking is a wonderful way to relax a stressed body. Do find this simple fact hard to believe? The following subsequent paragraphs will give an insight into different ways cooking can aid in the reduction of stress.

The Healing Effect

Not only as the modern lifestyle increased stress level it brought along with other conditions such as broken hearts, boredom, insomnia, depression, and anxiety. Busy schedules, population explosion, traffic, air and sound pollution which often heighten stress levels in many working professionals are also part of the modern way of living. But nature gave us a gift; it gave us cooking, cooking is a wonderful time to shut out the rest of the world and spend some time alone to appreciate life and its beauty. The kitchen gives an enabling environment as it characteristically a peaceful and quiet environment away from the outside world that allows you to connect with your inner self. Cooking like meditation can have a strong healing effect on your mind.

Creativity

Stress can also put your thinking faculty on a pause, this can thus lead you to make irrational decisions. Cooking is a wonderful way to channel your inner mind and give yourself the spruce you need to get the creative juices flowing in you. For instance, when you try out new recipes or you create a new one yourself from the tiny bit of available raw ingredients, instances like this will have a positive effect on the way you handle other spheres of life as it makes you think outside the box. When you pick the ingredients, cut the vegetables into various sizes and shapes, when you mix or stir in a certain way mixing, the addition of spices, seasonings, and the final decoration of the meal in a plate – This is a wonderful way to reduce stress because it gives you the right to do it your own way without anyone bickering you on your decisions.

Activating The Senses

Psychiatrists state that stress sometimes can lead to numbness of sensory nerves but the reverse is the case when you are cooking, it is a very good means of activating all the five senses. The scents released by the various cooking ingredients, herbs and spices give life to your sense of smell, the aroma can also have a reinvigorating effect by totally improving your mood. Seeing raw vegetables and other spices, the sound made by utensils and cutleries, the tingling sensation you feel on your skin as result of heat from the cooking stove and tasting of the dish when it is finally ready – all of this simple activities breathe a new life into our sense of sight, hearing, touch and taste, senses that we need to survive in our daily life.

Cooking As Therapy – Using Cooking As A Stress Reliever

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The simple act of cooking has an everlasting therapeutic value cognitively, physically, intrapersonally and socially. When you look at the physical aspect, cooking requires you to move your wrist, shoulders, fingers, elbow, neck giving you an excellent overall balance. Proper strength is needed in the upper limb for mixing, lifting, chopping, and cutting. In addition, the body's sensory awareness is heightened while dealing with hot objects/surfaces.

Cooking also makes people feel a bit better about themselves especially if they are cooking for others, cooking a meal for yourself or a group of people can make you feel fulfilled as it gives you the chance to nurture other people. Recently, health practitioners and counsellors from different parts of the globe are recommending the use of cooking or baking as therapeutic treatments for people suffering from conditions such as anxiety, depression, and other mental-health issues.

This type of therapeutic treatment is usually aimed at people who are living a chaotic and busy lifestyle, the idea here is to lecture them on healthy cooking and eating skills.

So what makes cooking a relaxing activity such that it helps ease the mind thus pumping reinvigorating energy round the body?

First, it is advised to take a break whenever the mind is stressed. Cooking provides the perfect opportunity for that much needed break as daily day to day activities can sometimes be overwhelming that it can almost drive anyone insane. Taking a break to cook yourself a good meal will give you the

chance to relax your mind and take your mind off anything that is bothering you.

Cooking is an activity that engages the methodical part of the brain as it allows people who are stressed out to focus on the task at hand, giving them the chance to shift their focus from their worries thus leaving them satisfied for completing a task. Spending time on a direct and simple activity like cooking a meal can help the brain relax, this is why most people like to cook a meal at the end of the day because it is a brilliant way to free your mind from the stress of work.

The satisfactory feeling of cooking a healthy meal for yourself or a group can improve mental health because you would feel happier when you receive positive comment on your cooking skills. It makes sense to think of cooking as therapy because food is one of the important basic needs of all living things required for survival thus food has a lot of meaning culturally, ethnically and religiously. Cooking can be used as a wonderful therapeutic tool for helping people find healthy hobbies they can engage in instead of abusing drugs and alcohol.

Overall, the simple ability to take some head space and cook a meal at the end of the day can ease the stress of the day. It gives us a chance to look back and reflect on the day's activities, providing something worthy when you feel your day was wasted.

10 ways to make cooking enjoyable, not stressful

Here are some ways to make cooking more enjoyable and not getting stressed out;

Like a painter without a brush, using the appropriate utensils for cooking is very important. You might be using spoons, knives or spatulas for things they are not meant for.

When you cook more often, you will see it more as a hobby instead of a chore, this gives you the chance to cook healthy food for yourself and your family. While there is nothing wrong with having a treat once in a while, try as much as possible to cook natural healthy food.

When you cook from the scratch, it gives you an idea of what you adding and removing from the recipe, this gives you the room to try something new, allowing you to bring your creativity to the fore.

Cooking is a great way to spend quality time with your family as it gives the opportunity to eat together as a family. This alone is enough motivation to get you off your butt and cook a nice meal for your family.

In order to make your children passionate about food, and make them more health conscious about what they eat, you can encourage them to join you in the kitchen. Your child will provide company while you tutor them on how to make a decent meal.

You can spice things up and try a new recipe or a new ingredient that you have never used before in bids to make cooking enjoyable and fun.

Practice they say make perfect, you become a better cook when you cook more often. Cooking might actually give you a chance to use those cookery books that are gathering dust in your kitchen, and see the magic you can make.

If you don't have a signature dish, why not try and come up with one, or you could try and make a classic dish with a modern twist, anything to keep you inventing new ways of doing things.

With time as you build up confidence and your cooking skill has improved greatly improves, you can invite a few friends over for an evening of nice food and great company. You will be more fulfilled when you do this more often.

Having the right pans makes a huge difference, if you are presently currently using old pans that have seen better days, it is advisable to get new sets of pans as this will make you enjoy your cooking more than ever.