



# STRESS IN THE CITY

A combination of work worries, financial pressures, being far from home and social woes mean many UAE residents are affected by stress, with the number of sufferers rising faster than our collective blood pressure. So what can we do to stay sane and healthy? We speak to the experts and find the best ways to keep calm and carry on

## 01 THE STRESS TEST

While most of us will know if we're a bit stressed out (the pulling out of hair, disturbed sleep patterns, and problematic skin usually give it away), plenty of people are going through life thinking it's normal to have anxiety, headaches and mood swings. If you'd like to establish exactly what strains you're under, head to Breath & Health, where a 90-minute session with their high-tech Indigo machine measures biofeedback, reactions

and responses via five sensors. It's pain-free and provides an accurate reading of which body parts and organs are suffering, and even indicates intolerances, vitamin or mineral deficiencies and mental health issues. Breath & Health, Al Wasl Road, Dubai, Dhs550 for 90 minutes. Tel: (04) 3488030. [breathandhealth.net](http://breathandhealth.net)

## 02 TAI CHI CHUAN

Everyone thinks they know all about the Chinese martial art tai

chi chuan, but, although sixth dan black belt master John Duval of the Golden Eagle Martial Arts describe it as, "meditation and medication in motion", tai chi chuan is not just for elderly people in parks. Focused on body kinetics, or balancing your ying and yang energy through controlled movement and breathing, it has numerous health benefits, ranging from increasing flexibility and muscle strength to lowering blood pressure and reducing stress. It is also a high-level martial art and the intensity of a session, can range from

simply raising and lowering your arms while breathing in and out through your nose to produce pure calm to performing complex movements perfected over years. It can be extremely physically challenging (we know, we've tried it). So, anyone out there pumping iron in the gym and shunning tai chi, be warned – master John Duval could take you out with one finger. Dubai Herbal And Treatment Centre, Oud Metha Road, Dubai, Mon and Wed 6.30pm to 7.30pm, Dhs300 for private session, Dhs350 for five classes. Tel: (04) 3351200. [dubaihtc.com](http://dubaihtc.com)



### 03 ACUPUNCTURE

One of the most ancient techniques for stress relief, acupuncture works by unblocking energy flow around the body, often helping with neck pain and tension headaches at the same time. It also releases pain-killing chemicals called endorphins, improves blood circulation and relaxes muscles. We visited Dr Wang Xiaolin who placed tiny needles on our hands, head, arms, neck and feet where they stayed for half an hour before he treated us to a vigorous head and shoulder massage. There was no pain, just a strange sensation of energy waves up and down our limbs, and we left feeling lighter and brighter.

Dr Wang Xiaolin, Mercato Family Clinic, Jumeirah Beach Road, Dubai, Dhs300 for an hour. Tel: (04) 3448844. [acupuncturedubai.com](http://acupuncturedubai.com)

### 04 AROMATHERAPY

Putting a few drops of essential oil on a washcloth then placing it at your feet as you shower is a quick (cheap) way to de-stress with scent. Look for sandalwood, bergamot, geranium, jasmine, peppermint and neroli oils, available from Organic Foods & Café from Dhs15.

Organic Foods & Café, The Dubai Mall, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai. Tel: (04) 4340577. Metro: Dubai Mall. [organicfoodsandcafe.com](http://organicfoodsandcafe.com)



04

06

### 05 DIET

Dr Chandy George, an Ayurvedic doctor at Balance Wellbeing, says "Consuming easily digestible food at night, can really help ensure uninterrupted sleep, which in itself can relieve individuals of a huge amount of stress. At the same time, satisfying all the six tastes in your diet is crucial to lowering stress levels. A healthy diet, including comfort food like warm oatmeal, can actually boost levels of serotonin, a calming brain chemical, to aid in fighting stress. A nutritious diet, with the likes of oranges, spinach, avocado, pistachio and black tea are recommended to counteract the impact of stress, by boosting the immune system and lowering blood pressure."

Balance Wellbeing Club, Oasis Centre, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, consultation with Dr Chandy George Dhs200. Tel: (04) 3747010. Metro: Business Bay. [balance-wellbeing.centre.com](http://balance-wellbeing.centre.com)

### 06 YOGA

It's not exactly news that yoga helps with stress, but a new breed of techniques could add some excitement to your regular mat class. From the soon to be



05

launched SUP Yoga (that's postures on stand up paddleboards) at Watercooled at Jebel Ali hotel to AcroYoga, which combines acrobatics and yoga, these light-hearted sessions aren't as serious as traditional disciplines, with more emphasis on

cardio to get the heart pumping. AcroYoga is particularly playful, blending stretching and strengthening poses with the dynamic power of acrobatics in a 90-minute weekly class in Safa Park. The session is free, but donations to charity are welcome. AcroYoga, Safa Park, Dubai, Fri 10am, free. Tel: (050) 7359683

### 07 MEDITATION

Dr Herbert Benson, founder of the Mind-Body Medical Institute, which is affiliated with Harvard University and several Boston hospitals, reports that meditation induces a host of biochemical and physical changes in the body collectively referred to as the "relaxation response". The relaxation response includes changes in metabolism, heart rate, respiration, blood pressure and brain chemistry. The word 'meditate' stems from the Latin root *meditatum*, meaning to ponder. Meditation is generally

an inwardly oriented, personal practice, which individuals do by themselves, but classes are available. There are many misconceptions about meditation and the most common one is that only monks meditate regularly.

Shivani Adalja of The Alignment Institute learnt the science of meditation in the Himalayan foothills for three years. Combined with NLP and hypnosis, she has developed her own unique technique of meditation where a complete novice can experience instant calm in minutes by following her instructions. She has designed a library of 600 meditations that can help with everything from busting stress to dealing with depression, and here shares instructions for quickly finding calm:

- Lie down or sit in a comfortable position
  - Breathe in for a count of eight and breathe out for a count of 16 a few times until your body is completely relaxed
  - Visualise beautiful violet light circling above your head and slowly entering your body from the top of your head
  - Feel the light spreading from your face to the rest of your body gradually and relaxing your body instantly
  - Visualise yourself soaking in this violet light for about ten minutes and continue to breathe in deeply.
- Shivani Adalja, The Alignment Institute, Abu Dhabi. Tel: (050) 6811728. [shivaniadalja.com](http://shivaniadalja.com)